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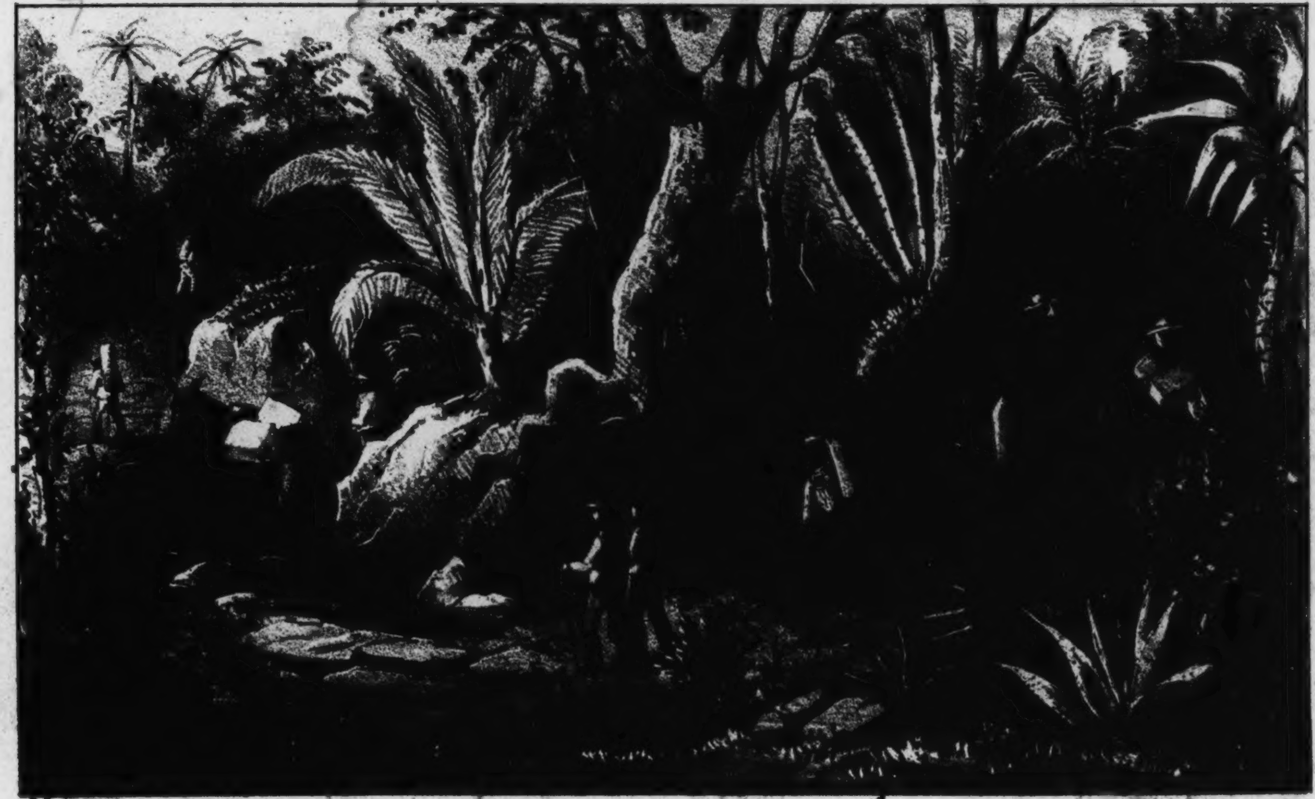
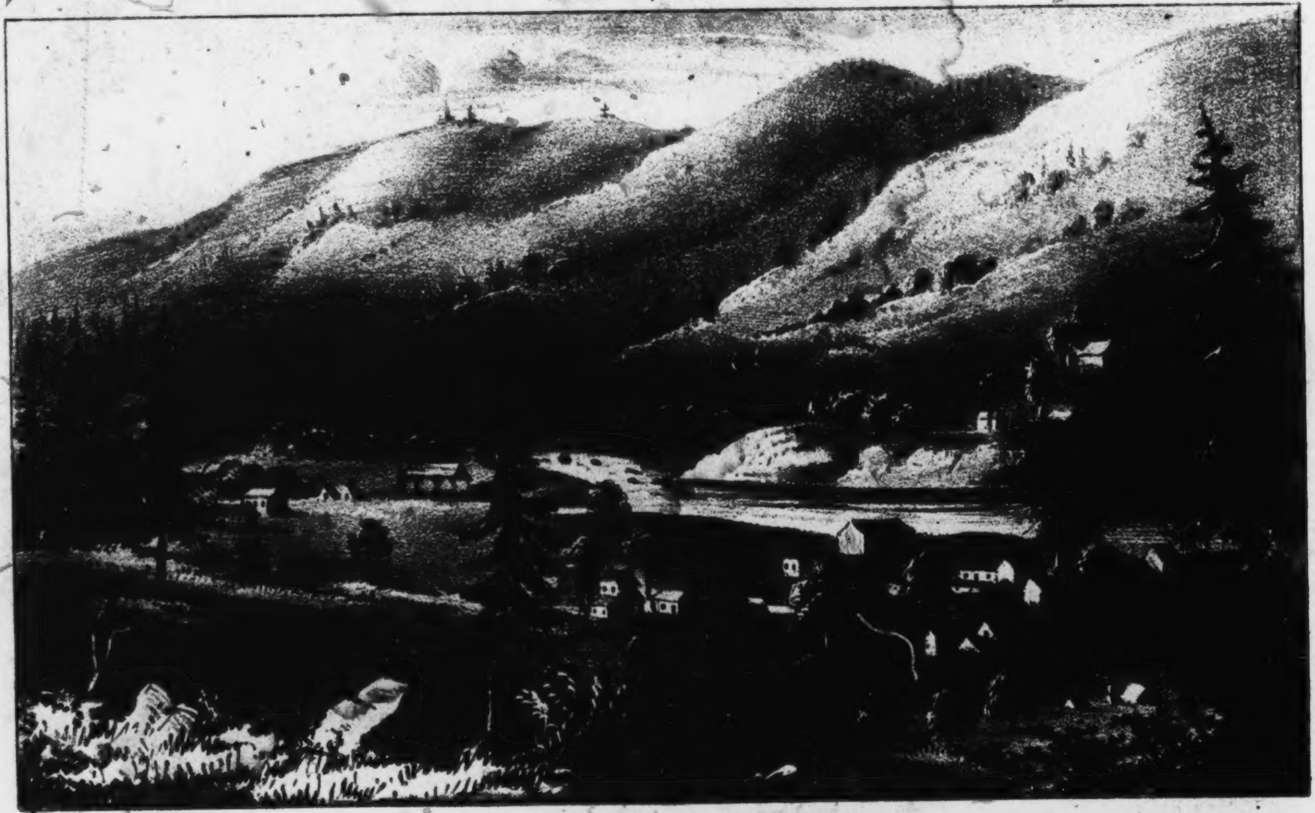


SCENE ON THE ISTHMUS.

North



P. Emmert

VIEW OF CULLOMA.

NOTES ON CALIFORNIA

AND

THE PLACERS:

HOW TO GET THERE, AND WHAT TO DO AFTERWARDS.

BY ONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE.

James Delevan

NEW-YORK.
H. LONG & BROTHER,
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NOTES ON CALIFORNIA AND THE PLACERS.

CHAPTER I.

First discovery of gold in California—hopes and doubts—increasing rumors—confirmed by Governor Mason—general rush to the placers—Resolution to attempt the adventure—friends dissuade—Requisites for a traveller—choice of routes—determined to go by the Isthmus—apply for a passage ticket up the Pacific—compelled to take one for the Falcon—outfits—gold washers—preserved meats and other humbugs—Bowie knives and revolvers a better investment—dreadful accounts from the Isthmus—retrospection and its consequences—Embark—Adieu to friends—out sight of land—disorder of the ship—gloomy fears and heavy hearts—choused out of my berth—stowed away in the hold—scant fare and bad attendance—weather improves—a walk on deck—Vermonter—confab with Jack—a sailor's yarn—snake story—off Charleston—passengers sea-sick—Vermonter resorts to Jack's medicine chest—Savannah—coast of Florida—arrival at Havana—Moro Castle—go on shore—gambling houses—sail from Havana—pass Yucatan in the night—delightful passage—fearful anticipations—arrival off Chagres—committee chosen on the passage contracts for our passage across the Isthmus—the Orus unable to take all the passengers—runs aground in the river and is detained—Captain of the Falcon desirous of clearing his ship—unwillingness of passengers to land—thrust ashore in the rain—a wet night—Crescent City arrives—Crowd at Chagres—Orus detained—arrives and we embark—delightful passage—scenery on the river—parrots—monkeys—alligators—guanoes—story of a murder—new fangled edibles—gourmandise at Gandaloupe—Orus grounds—embark in canoes—land for the night—arrive at Gorgona—pitch my tent ashore, to bide my time to get farther.

WHEN the news of the discovery of gold in such large quantities in California first reached us, there were many doubters in regard to the reality of the EL DORADO, said to be re-discovered by the emigrants to the Pacific. Myself among others, was exceedingly skeptical, and I felt quite sure, that the *humbug* would soon explode, and that some, who had at the first burst started for the diggings in full expectation, would soon return, and if with any ears at all, with the usual concomitant of disappointment, an unpleasant tenant on the *inside.* I held in memory the adventures of the first explorers of this continent. The huge tracts of shining sand, and mica boulders, which had been sent home by Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and his compeers; I pondered upon the fate of Sir Walter Raleigh, (and the ill success of his unfortunate quest of the precious metal,) who might have escaped the doom which that heartless tyrant, James I., had so long suspended, if he had had the good fortune to obtain, even the smallest quantity of the *dust*, which now by all account, could be scooped up in pailfuls in any of the ravines of the new conquest.

Frequent were the colloquies held with "true believers" in respect to these matters. These gave implicit credit to all they heard: even to the extravagant story of the discovery of a mountain of the solid metal; and had the same been related of the existence of the "Valley of Diamonds" of Sinbad the Sailor, their credulity would have been extended, and they would have tasked their imaginations for some mode of penetrating it, without invoking the aid of an *Orc*, a *Roc*, or a condor, to enable them to descend into its inmost recesses.

But the reports, instead of growing weaker, gathered strength from day to day; and soon it was announced, that a respectable quantity of the dust had arrived, had been assayed at the mint, and found to be much richer than the government standard. At length, I received a letter from one of the adventurers whose fancied delusion I had endeavored to restrain, enclosing a sample of the products of his toil, and giving the most flattering prospects of his future success. This was followed by the despatch of Governor Mason, published in December, 1848, confirming the reports of the settlers. All doubts now gave place to conviction. Priest and layman, Christian and infidel, alike became devout believers, and thousands upon thousands of impatient sinners, were on the *qui vive* for departure. Well then, thought I, to California I go. I, that have never been backward in adventure, will not be laggard on this occasion; and I soon made known my resolution to my dear friends at home. Many of these, thought me a subject for a writ "*de lunatico inquirendo*," and used the same dissuasives with me that I had lavished on others, but in vain.

I was neither young nor inexperienced, and was determined to dare the adventure. Some of "Fortune's buffets" had fallen to my share, and some few of her "rewards," and though I do not boast of having taken them with "equal thanks," I neither foolishly repined at the one, nor more foolishly became elated at the other. "Things must be as they may," saith the renowned Corporal Nym; and, strengthening my philosophy by the axiom of that worthy, I resolved forthwith to attempt the perilous achievement. The best requisites for a traveller in any country, (setting aside the needful,) are good health, and good temper. Both of these I had in a tolerable degree. The great political maxim which has been put in the mouth of "the last of the Romans," "*Never to ask any thing that is not right, nor submit to any thing that is wrong*," may do very well for a statesman, or for one determined to have his own way, right or wrong, but it won't do for an emigrant to California. Next to the great blessing of health, is the possession of a reasonable equanimity of mind, and a disposition to make the best of circumstances. And a man who has the "fardels" of life to bear, and that too *up-hill*, must often submit to be choused of his right, and even endure wrong in silence, whenever a contest with injustice would only make the matter worse.

My resolution having been taken, the next step was to determine the route I should take to the land of promise. The overland course, by the Rocky Mountains, was too long, and the way dangerous. I am no flincher from danger when it comes, and have no fear that my "hand" will not be able to protect my "head" in sufficient emergencies. But I have no passion for breaking my neck in a buffalo hunt, or to be *stopped* on my way to the diggings, in a skirmish with Indians. All the glory which could be gained in the most successful foray, might be extinguished at once by the arrow of an *Apache*, or *Sioux*, in the gizzard, and the best epitaph which could be devised for my cenotaph, could afford *me* no consolation for such a catastrophe. A sea voyage was therefore determined on. Round *Horn*, or through *Magellan*, were out of the question, the season not being propitious; and I chose, of the other modes of access to the Pacific, the next longest passage by sea, and the shortest by land; and, with many thousands, bent upon the same expedition, I determined to embark for the Bay of Darien, and go by the way of the Isthmus to Panama, and thence up the coast to St. Francisco.

Having thus decided, my first step was to secure a passage in one of Howland and Aspinwall's steamers, which was expected to be at Panama. On applying at their office for this purpose, I was told that before a ticket for their steamer could be sold me, I must purchase one for a passage in the Falcon, then about sailing for Chagres; and on application to M. O. Roberts, Esq., the agent of that vessel, I secured a ticket, by paying one hundred and fifty dollars. I leave it to the reader to divine the motive of Howland and Aspinwall's refusal to sell me a ticket for their ship on the Pacific, until I had obtained one for the Falcon, as I know of no business relations between the owners of the respective steamers. It savored too much of coercion; but let that pass.

Behold me now, provided with passports to St. Francisco. The next thing was to procure my out-fit of provisions, implements, &c. No person can describe the various things submitted to view, and all pronounced by the venders as absolutely necessary at the placers. Various patterns of *gold washers*, got up to *sell*, and only *to sell*, were declared requisites, *sine qua non;* and it was astonishing, (no, nothing was astonishing in that day, but the ingenuity and perseverance of their vendors,) how completely inexperienced adventurers, like myself, were duped into parting with our present gold, in the hopes of securing more thereafter, by the use of their *infernal machines*.

The sellers of other out-fits, such as preserved meats, (sure to spoil as soon as within the tropics,) and preventive medicines, so much needed on the Isthmus, were equally on the alert to get rid of their commodities, and happy was he who escaped being taken in. I was not within that category, for I was determined to go well provided, and consequently, in many of my purchases, was *done exceedingly brown*. I may as well state the fact here as elsewhere—the gold washers, and preserved meats, were perfect humbugs! and four-fifths of our *necessary* out-fit were mere incumbrances, and of no use whatsoever. The meats spoiled, and were thrown away, before we got to Panama; and of the highly lauded *washers*, not one reached the placers, at which they were to be of so much use. Yet all these, together with Bowie knives, revolvers, rifles, knapsacks, Mackinaw blankets, fabrics of gutta percha, and India rubber, went off like hot cakes of a cold morning. In short, those were great days in Chatham-street, and those places were Jews of "all religions" "most do congregate."

The Falcon was to sail on the first of February, and before that time arrived I was fully prepared. My *gold washer*, and traps in general, were stowed on board, as well as my precious provender, which was to be so excellent at the placers. I had only to march on board, with my arms, accoutrements, and personal baggage. Fortunately too, I shipped some provisions round Cape Horn for future emergencies. And now I found time to *think* upon the past, and ruminate upon the future. Most horrid accounts of the obstacles in the route by the Isthmus were continually arriving. Deadly diseases were said to be prevalent there. No insurance on life could be effected, except at enormous premiums; and such policies as would be granted, limited the stay of the insured at the Isthmus to a few days. After all, thought I, this gold hunting is a dangerous business; and the weather being gloomy, and a fit of the blue devils, (not very frequent guests however,) setting in, I began, like the tailor's boy the first week of his apprenticeship, to be "sorry I learnt the trade."

But I soon brushed away those cobwebs of the brain, and whistling the air of that delectable song, "*A light heart and a thin pair of breeches*," I got my arms in order, ammunition well stowed, trunks judiciously packed, and awaited the important hour of sailing. The time at length arrived, and I soon found myself in good season on board the Falcon. The day was stormy, with incessant rain, and most "admired confusion" reigned on the pier from whence we were to depart, as well as upon the deck of the steamer. Several dear friends drove down to bid me God speed, but the uproar was so great that we could communicate by signs only. The steam, which was hissing through the escape-valve, was now let upon the engine, the hawser was cast off, one more farewell was waved with heavy hearts on both sides; and, losing sight of those whom perhaps I had looked upon for the last time, we darted down the bay with a velocity which did not discredit her name.

The next morning found us in blue water, and out sight of land. We had cast off from the pier at one o'clock, P. M., and whatever industry was used throughout the night to get the baggage stowed, and the decks in order, had affected but little. On taking a survey of the vessel, I found everything at *sixes and sevens*, and the aspect of matters was discouraging enough. The weather was cold and disagreeable;

the deck filthy and wet; and the passengers so crowded that they could scarcely avoid treading on each other's toes. Many of these had for the first time left their comfortable homes and firesides, and the society of their families and friends; with the prospect of being obliged to forego, for sometime, the enjoyments of civilized life; and sadness and gloom, which the disorder on board, and the aspect of the weather had no tendency to dissipate, were deeply depicted in their countenances. None knew that he might live to return; or if he did, that, broken down in fortune and constitution, he might not be an invalid for life. All before us was in doubtful obscurity. If we escaped the scylla of the Isthmus, the charybdis of California yawned for us on the other side. Some might come back with splendid fortunes and enjoy the remainder of their days in affluence and ease; but doubt and fear seemed to reign in that vast crowd, and all looked downcast and solemn.

It must be admitted, that for a season, I partook of the general feeling, but soon arousing from the *doldrums*, I whistled my favorite stave aforesaid, and set myself to work to find my berth on board, and to arrange my baggage. After a season, I was conducted below the *second* deck, in the lower regions, or the hold; and my philosophy was a little tried, when I found that the very liberal sum of one hundred and fifty dollars, which had been exacted of me, had not procured me better quarters: especially, as I learned that others, for similar *privileges*, had paid, some an hundred, and others, a quarter more only. But "patience and shuffle the cards," thought I, all things may work for the best, and this voyage to Chagres will soon be over.

For the vast number of passengers, stowed on board the Falcon, no adequate provision had been made, or proper attendance provided, although more than a month had elapsed, after the tickets were disposed of, before the sailing of the ship; and at the table, food and the accessories were not to be obtained, but by securing the attention of the villanous waiters, by bribes. That such impositions could have been practiced by men of respectable standing in society, I could never have believed, had not that sad teacher, experience, produced conviction. On the whole, it was a most outrageous *take in;* but competitors, I trust, will in future regulate these matters, and secure other emigrants from extortion and ill-usage.

It will be remembered, that this vessel was a *mail steamer;* receiving a most liberal compensation from the Government for that service, besides the receipts for passengers and freight: consequently, no excuse can be offered for not furnishing proper attendance and abundance of provisions. To say that the number was unexpectedly large, is no palliation; for it was wrong to take more than could conveniently be disposed of, in order to gratify the cupidity of the owners. But if any extenuation can be shown for these delinquencies, none can be framed for the swindle which was practiced upon me. I was shown a diagram of the ship, at the time I purchased my ticket, and the position of my berth was pointed out upon it; but I found myself thrust into a quarter entirely different from that shown me; and, instead of a *berth*, a wretched apology, called a *standee*; (that is, a thing made to be put up at night, and taken down during the day,) was forced upon me: and my dear-bought accommodations, I found no better, if as good, as the common steerage. I regard it as a duty to state these facts, so that, if the proprietors of the Falcon, like those of the Argo of old, should become suddenly rich, their neighbors may know from whom their *golden fleeces* were *shorn*.

The second day out, the weather was better, and continued to improve. The decks were getting clear; and with a view of expelling the "*bitter*" from the "*cud of fancy*," which had been given me to "chew"; as well as to get on my *sea legs*, I went aloft and made my way forward. The true sailor, whether ashore or afloat, in all his varieties, is an interesting study; and whenever opportunities offer, I never fail to listen to *fo'castle* dialogues, which are often spiced with nautical humor. As I was going forward towards one of the crew, who, from every indication of garb and manner, from his tarpaulin hat to the hitching of his waistband, I knew to be a regular "*salt*," I happened to notice a tall sandy-haired passenger, with a doleful countenance, making his way, (tack and half tack, as Jack would express it,) as if with intent to accost the sailor I had observed. If I were to surmise the place of the nativity of this individual, I should locate it east of Lake Champlain, and something south of the latitude of 45°; as he appeared a *verdant* specimen of the races of the green hills, and probably by a trip down the lake and the river, Gotham had been, until now, the *ultima thule* of his voyages by water. As he approached, I stopped sufficiently near to be within hearing of the expected confab.

"Good morning, Capting;" said the passenger.

"Thankee kindly, Judge:' was the reply. "You *are* a Judge I take it;" he continued.

"Well, no, I aint; Gran'ther is; and dad may be, one of these days; but Lord knows whether I shall ever get back to be anything again. But now," he continued, "what kind of a place is this Chaggurs we are going to? Comfortable to live in I take it? if we should'nt get a chance to go ever right away!"

"O yes!" said Jack; "comfortable enough, while you *do live*; but a short life and a merry one, is the word there."

"Du tell!" replied the Vermonter; "is it so sickly? What may the distemper be?"

"Why, yellow fever always;" said the tar. "But just now, the 'nigger fever' is bad; which, if it takes hold smartly, carries a fellow off in the smoking of two cigars; and if he weathers it all, he turns as black as the inside of the devil's coal-scuttle. Look at that chap," he continued, pointing to a Lascar sailor, of delicate features and double ebony skin, who stood nigh; "the last trip he was as fair as a lady's waiting-maid. See what twenty-four hours did for him."

"O, Moses! what a horrid disease!" said the passenger. "A man mought better die, than be turned to a nigger. Is there nothing a fellow can take to keep it off?"

"Well," replied Jack, with a wink at me; "the doctor of the Constitution, when I was aboard of her, used to say, that a good drench of sea water was the best medicine he knew of. But, messmate," continued Jack, "if you *do* get out of Chagres alive, you will have a hard chance of it on the river. The Orus can't get half way to Cruces; and the rest of the way you will have to go in canoes; and the alligators make nothing of taking out a passenger or two, by way of toll; and whitest skinned chaps generally fare hardest. And sometimes they capsize the canoe, and make mutton of the whole together."

"Couldn't a fellow go through the woods by land?" asked the green one.

"You might, if you knew the way;" answered Jack; "unless you met with the luck of Dick Fid, the *bo'sen* of Old Ironsides, when he was down the coast. He started to join the Ohio on the other side, and was not heard of for two months; and then he came up coastwise from Maracaybo, forty miles down South."

"How came he to lose his way?" inquired the passenger, who, with all his terror, was yet inquisitive.

"Well," replied Jack, "Dick sometimes used to spin devilish tough yarns, and may-be the story aint true; but the way he logged it was this. Getting pretty well tired, after splicing the main brace, he laid himself down on a thundering big log to sleep, and did'nt remember anything that happened until he waked up about sunrise, and found himself going at the rate of fifteen knots, on the top of a big snake, which he had taken for a tree; and lashed fast by a small chap about as big as your arm, to keep him from falling overboard. And, he said, he had just time to get out his jack-knife, and cut himself loose, when souse they all went together into the lake. So he swam off to a craft at anchor, and worked his passage home."

"O, merciful man!" cried the Vermonter, "why, how big do the critturs grow?"

"Why, down about Demerary," said Jack, "they *do* say, that they get to be as large as a sugar hogshead, but I never saw one much bigger than a water butt."

Some order was now given which required the services of the sailor, and he broke off, leaving his auditor aghast at the dangers in prospect.

A few hours brought us off Charleston; from whence a steamer had been despatched with the mail, which brought us a *few more* passengers. On rounding Cape Hatteras, as is most generally the case, the weather was boisterous, and some of our "*compagnons du voyage*," suddenly became both sea and homesick,—when they proceeded to dispose of some of their outfit, with the intention of going ashore at the first opportunity. But the vacuum, if any went on board the Charleston vessel, was filled by the new comers from the South, and our condition was as comfortless as before. Among the sea-sick customers, I noticed my friend from the Green Mountains, who stopped one of the swabbers who had just drawn a bucket of sea water, and drank deep potations of the *specific* recommended by Jack. And it stood him in good stead. Before that, he was, to use the sailor simile, "heaving and setting like a ram tied to a gate," but afterwards, things went on more smoothly with him, and he was one of the soonest convalescent.

We ran into Savannah at night, and on the sixth, we sailed along the coast of Florida; the mercury being up to 72°, the air was delightfully pleasant, although the aspect of the coast was uninteresting. At eight o'clock, on the morning of the eighth, we reached Havana, and the view of the castle (the Moro) and the forts which protected the beautiful harbor, was interesting to all, and particularly to me, who had never visited that port before. The day was clear and warm, and to us, just from the North, the heat was really oppressive.

The authorities of Havana, politely tendered to the passengers of the Falcon, "the freedom of the city;" that is, in other words, allowed us to go ashore without passports,—a privilege of which we thankfully availed ourselves,—and remained in town during the day and evening,—visiting the lions, and amusing ourselves in various ways. I took a ride in a volanté,—an odd looking vehicle, which, when not in use, is stowed away in the sitting-room. The senoras and senoritas were not conspicuous in the streets, but their lustrous black eyes were occasionally seen to sparkle through the lattices of the verandahs. Our advent among them, clad in broad cloths and cassimeres, while the Dons of the place (the thermometer being at 80°,) wore the thinnest of white linen, must have created some surprise; and perhaps the congregation of so many unbrowned complexions, had we not been otherwise remarkable, would have excited some notice. In the evening, most excellent music was "discoursed" by the band of the Governor-general, in front of his Palace.

Havana is the worst place in the world for those infected by the mania of gaming; and in no city of Europe, are there more *hells*, as they are there denominated, in which this abominable vice is encouraged. Where these abound, assassinations are frequent; and it often happens, that the successful adventurer is robbed of his winnings and his life,—perhaps by his less fortunate competitor, who chooses in this way, to resume the treasures he has lost. Our stay was short; but not a few indulged themselves with an opportunity of courting the fickle goddess; and I doubt not, that the Falcon carried in past the Moro, more gold than she took out. The steamer Isabel, a regular passage-boat between Havana and Charleston, sailed on the afternoon of our arrival, and many availed themselves of the opportunity to write to their friends at home.

The object of our stop at Havana was now accomplished. The Falcon had taken in coal and water, and the signal for sailing was given. All was hurry to get on board, and it was apprehended that many would be left behind: be that as it may, the crowd upon the decks seemed undiminished; and on the ninth, at ten o'clock, P. M., the anchor was up, the wheels in motion, and we steered our course so as to weather Cape Antonio. It was dark when we bore away south to pass between Cuba and the peninsula of Yucatan; which with its contiguous department of Guatemala, may be called the classic ground of Mexico. I regretted this, as even a distant view of a colony which many suppose was originally founded by the HIVITES, driven from their former possessions at the conquest of Canaan, and whose ruined palaces and temples scattered around, is so well described in the excellent books of Stephens.

Nothing can be more delightful than a cruise through the Caribbean Sea, at this season of the year. The weather was fine, the water smooth; and various vessels in sight, standing on every tack, enlivened the prospect as we proceeded on our way to Chagres. Thoughts, however, of the dreaded Isthmus, could not fail of intruding themselves, the nearer we approached it; and although I was not so much alarmed as my Green Mountain friend appeared to be, by the story of Jack, yet I could not keep down my apprehensions of dangers and difficulties there. Still, every revolution of the wheel was bringing us nearer and nearer; and the thermometer, now at 89° at sea, gave us a sample of what the heat *might* be, close under the land, where the free air would be obstructed, and the rays of the sun more powerful.

The morning of the 12th arrived, and we were off Chagres. On the passage, a committee had been chosen to make arrangements for our transit to Panama. This committee soon made a treaty with Captain Tucker, of the "Orus," a river steamer, to deliver us and our "*plunder*" at Gorgona, at the rate of ten dollars a *head*, and one dollar for each article of baggage and freight. Another was made with a Doctor Heintzeman, to furnish saddle-mules equipped, at ten dollars each, and to transport our baggage, &c. from Cruces to Panama. These being completed, at the request of the commander of the Orus, Captain Thompson ran the Falcon into Navy Bay, when the other vessel could with safety come alongside, for the passengers and freight. Somewhat more than half the passengers, with their effects, were taken on board the Orus by evening; and the boat was hauled off to her anchor. In the morning, she got under way, and steamed up the river. Whether the Orus could have safely carried any more, I do not know; but those who were left behind—in which category I happened to be—were in an uncomfortable position; for Captain Thompson, of the Falcon, sink or swim, would have been glad to have packed in all on board, in order to save his provisions. The Orus started on Thursday, and we expected her back the next night, and therefore were unwilling to be set ashore; but, the captain seemed determined to clear his vessel, and, running back to Chagres, to put us on short allowance, as a means of forcing us to land. The Orus did not arrive the next day;

and we still remained on board the Falcon. The next day, (Saturday,) the Orus, although anxiously looked for, did not heave in sight; and in the afternoon, either the captain's larder, or his *humanity*, became exhausted—and, in the midst of torrents of rain, he shoved us ashore, bag and baggage. I was fortunate enough to get under a canvass roof, although my effects were left to 'bide "the pelting of the pitiless storm." Many were not so lucky, but were drenched to the skin; the night was warm, however, and in the morning it became clear and pleasant.

The Crescent City had arrived the day after we did, and several sail-craft also—all crowded with passengers; and the congregation awaiting passage across, now amounted to fifteen hundred. At length the Orus—which had not been able to proceed more than eighteen miles up the river, where she had grounded—made her appearance. The cause of the delay, was a difficulty of procuring canoes for transportation to Gorgona (or Cruces;) but the inconveniences of the detention were swallowed up in the joy of once more being able to "go a-head;" and despatch being made in stowing our baggage, by one o'clock on Monday we bid farewell to our fellow-sufferers on the beach at Chagres, and were on our way up the river.

The weather was hot and comfortless; but the scenery of the river was fine, and the passage delightful. Birds of the most splendid plumage, startled by the noise of the wheels, flitted across the river; among these, the variety of the parrot kind were conspicuous. These would gaze from the boughs above us, as if wondering at the cause of the disturbance. The monkeys, too, as they leaped from tree to tree, or hung down the boughs, suspended by their tails, would "mock and chatter at us." These merry rascals seemed to enjoy the uproar, and to laugh at the negroes who were toiling at the paddles, because they were obliged to work, while themselves were gentlemen at large. It is part of the creed of the negro, that the monkey *can* talk—but that he *won't*, for fear the Buckaras (white men) will make them work.

While the trees above us were thus peopled, the shores were lined with amphibii of strange appearance. Large snakes, (mere shoe-strings compared with those described by Jack;) iguanas, (guanos,) a lizzard of an enormous size, more than two feet from snout to tail, and of frightful ugliness; with the sometimes dangerous alligator, swelled the group. The passengers, many of them, tried the range of their pistols and rifles among them; but, unless attained in a very tender spot, (which is not often exposed,) they are not easily killed, and therefore no deaths were occasioned among them. Not so the guanos; many were killed; and I grieve to say, that some were barbarous enough to shoot the monkeys. It is indeed barbarous to make war upon animals whose form and actions so much resemble those of the human species. A gentleman once told me, that being at Jamaica, in the West Indies, he was induced to go a hunting with his host, the owner of a plantation at some distance from Port Royal; and that a young monkey was shot by one of the party. The mother, who was on the same tree near it, caught it in her arms while falling; and, pressing it to her breast, endeavored to stanch the blood, which was fast flowing from the wound—gazing upon its agonized countenance as it was expiring, with all the anxious fondness of a mother. In vain she placed the nipple to its mouth, in expectation that its usual nutriment would restore it; and when life had entirely left it, the poor wretch set up a cry of agony and despair. She heeded not the shot which reached her, and which was fired to compel her to surrender her infant; but though desperately wounded herself, she bore it off into the adjoining thicket.

Now, whatever I might be induced to do in an affray with the Indians, I know not; but it is my impression, that I should rather have shot two Camanches, than have murdered *that monkey.*

Yet, in tropical countries, this "miniature man" is hunted for food; and Coleridge, in his delightful book, "Six Months in the West Indies," tells us, that notwithstanding their close resemblance to small children, (being dished up without mutilation,) he conquered his repugnance, and fed upon them. The same author also informs us, that certain snakes are served up as edibles, and that these "hedge eels" are exceedingly delicious. The guano, too, is pronounced a great delicacy, and is eagerly sought for as an article of food.

While on this topic, an anecdote which was related to me many years ago, occurs to my memory. Be it known, that in the French Islands, the circle of *gourmandise* is very much enlarged. There, the large green worm, four inches long and as thick as the thumb, (known among us as the "potato worm,") is thought a great luxury; and a dish of them, in the best style of French cookery, is pronounced *impayable!* My informant was an old sea captain, who, in one of his voyages, had what is called a "ship's cousin" on board; that is, a relation of some of the owners, and half-supercargo. Both the captain and his friend were invited to spend the day at a plantation some ten miles from Point-au-Petre; and early in the morning they took their departure for the country. A splendid dinner was set before them, and, as is the custom, the new comer was greeted with the stranger's welcome, and received the undivided attention of the hostess—particularly as he knew no French.

A dish—to the eye, resembling fried oysters—was pressed upon him; and, nothing loath, he permitted his plate to be replenished. In short, though all was good, *this* plate was relished the best of all! The captain, too, partook of the delicious dish: and, the dinner ended, late in the evening they drove home.

"A most delightful day we have had of it!" said the *quasi* supercargo; "and although I did not understand a word they said, they were so polite, that I felt perfectly at home. And what a capital dinner! By the way, what were those delicious things, of which we both partook?"

"Were they not really delicious?" asked the captain.

"Never tasted anything more so in all my life," was the reply: "but what were they?"

"Never mind," said the captain—"I am glad you liked them."

"But I insist upon knowing!" said the other.

"Well, then," said the captain, "they were potato worms, fried in oil."

"The devil!—you are not in earnest?" said the supercargo.

"Fact, I assure you!" replied the captain.

"Potato worms! Eugh!—let me out!" But his revolting stomach gave him no leisure to alight; and, leaning out of the window, he ejected, not only the obnoxious viands, but all that he had imbibed beside!

As soon as he began to revive—"Potato worms!" he ejaculated. "Who the devil thought that I should ever have any inside of me! But, if ever I go to another French dinner, I wish I may be ——!"

The Orus puffed and tugged along up the river—so slowly as to afford us more than time enough to view the picturesque scenery, and to gaze upon the singular animals around us. About nightfall, we brought up upon the bottom, two miles short of the distance reached on the former passage; and our game was blocked, so far as further progress by steam was concerned. The residue of the way was to be travelled in canoes. On Tuesday morning, the loading of the canoes commenced—but progressed slowly, on account of our difficulty to negotiate with the natives, and their sluggish movements after the arrangements were made. At length, five of us, with our luggage, were stowed on board a canoe, to be propelled by three negroes with paddles and setting-poles; and at one o'clock, P.M., we bade adieu to the Orus, and proceeded slowly up the river until about ten o'clock at night, when we came to a general stopping-place, where some thirty or forty canoes were already moored. Here my friend and myself were so fortunate as to obtain permission from Lieutenant Blunt, to sleep in his tent; from which, however, we were routed at four, A.M., by our sable conductors, in order to resume our voyage up the river.

Travelling in a canoe, from the confinement of the limbs which it imposes, is tedious and painful; and a walk of a few miles to Gorgona being practicable, we gladly embraced the opportunity; and, tramping through the fields, under a burning sun, fatigued and hungry, we reached the place of our destination at one, P.M. Here we awaited the arrival of the canoe; and, having received my baggage, I unbrailed, and pitched my tent. Mr. J. took up his quarters under it with me; and here we soon learned, that our troubles had but just commenced.

CHAPTER II.

Detention at Gorgona—failure of the Contractor—scramble for mules and negroes—crowd constantly increasing—miserable horses and mules—strength of the Peons—mode of carrying their burdens—Gorgona described—Dishonesty of the carriers; baggage embezzled—get news of the Oregon at Panama—prepare to cross—good advice to the reader gratis—onward progress—horrible road—heat of the weather—disasters of the road—the summit gained—sight of the sea—arrive at Panama, and great joy thereat—Panama and the pilgrims within it—rush for passages—high price of tickets—leave port—Tobago Island—Coast described—the Oregon—more impositions—homily on Packet masters—Captain of the Oregon—insolence of office—breach of faith to passengers in the steerage—Jobation of the Captain by one of them—good effect—passage continued—Whales—the Vermonter on board—fish story—near the coast—land in sight—Volcanoes of Mexico—beauty of the coast—San Blas in sight—arrival at San Blas.

The large number of passengers crowded upon the Isthmus, all in haste for the Pacific, increased the demand for the means of transport, and the competition raised the prices for horses, mules, and Peons to an enormous rate: so that our contractor, Dr. H., in the lingo of Wall-street, became a "lame duck,"—that is, he failed; and each passenger was obliged to shift for himself, and do the best he could to procure *montures* for himself, and porters for his baggage. All was bustle and confusion; and the cry of *sauve qui peut!* at the rout of Waterloo, did not create a greater scattering, than the news of the failure of our contractor. Here I was thrown back upon the fund of patience upon which I had drawn heavily before, and it seemed that this resource was about to be exhausted. But recalling to mind the exclamation of Christopher Sly, to the abjuration of the hostess, *Panca palabras! cessa:* let the world slide! I *patched* my patience with his illustrious example, and resolved to "endure" the "pouring on" of disappointment and vexation.

On came the hordes from the Crescent City and the other vessels from the North. Ten passengers arrived where one departed, and the floods which continued to pour in, brought to memory the over-running of Italy by the Goths and Vandals, and the congregations pressing on to Palestine, in the days of Peter the Hermit.

The horses and mules employed in crossing the Isthmus were small, miserably lean, and weak, and most of the baggage was finally taken over on the backs of the natives, of which not a little was lost or plundered. The enormous weights which were placed upon these carriers was to me astounding, and that too over a track almost impassable by a northern man of ordinary strength, without any weight upon his shoulders. Two hundred pounds is an ordinary load for a negro; and some have been known to carry a trunk weighing two hundred and fifty pounds. I am not unaware that I hazard my reputation for veracity by a statement like this, and should scarcely venture to make it, did I not know that it will be substantiated by many of my fellow passengers.

The Peons make rude frames of wood, to which are affixed straps of cloth, through the loops of which they put their arms; and a band of the same material of considerable width goes over the forehead. The freight is lashed to this frame, so that when it is lifted to their backs, the top of the trunk, box, or barrel, as the case may be, rises above their heads; while the bottom comes down to the shoulder-blades; and strange to say, these biped carriers will bear more burdens than their four-footed animals.

Unable to procure means of transportation, and resolved not to be hurried, I remained three weeks at Gorgona. This town is pleasantly situated on the east bank of the Chagres. The buildings are principally constructed of cane, and many of them, raised considerably above the surface of the ground, are not uncomfortable. It contains a rude church and jail; and during the dry season, which usually lasts from January to April, is for a short period a tolerable residence. But the sooner a northern man is beyond the reach of the miasma of the Chagres, the better.

Enormous quantities of baggage were lost or embezzled on the journey over; and passengers were frequently coming back from Panama in search of their missing packages. The cases or wrappers of these might perhaps be discovered, but minus their contents. Ergo: the natives will violate the seventh article of the decalogue. And *certes*, many of the California pilgrims will do the like with the whole twelve. A man, therefore, who has anything to lose, must keep a bright lookout, or he will be reduced to the condition of Job, before he can get to the other coast, and lack the means of reaching the place of his destination.

It is customary to pay the Peons half the price agreed upon, in advance, and the remainder on delivery of the property at Panama: but a great many of the unscrupulous ones, on receiving the first payment, resort to drinking and gambling houses; and there remember to forget the customer and his baggage, taking especial good care to keep out of the way until the quest for him and the *plunder* has subsided. The only sure way, therefore, is to pack them off and bring up the rear in person, spurring them on occasionally, until you reach the place of delivery.

The news of the arrival of the steamer OREGON in Panama bay, and that she was to start up the coast on the 12th of March, now reached us. It became necessary, therefore, for me to prepare for a transit across the Isthmus, and having been so *fortunate* as to lose much of my baggage by theft, and being disencumbered of two of my largest boxes, the contents of which had cost me several hundred dollars, together with my store of *preserved meats*, which was distributed to the fowls of the air and the fish of the river; with sundry anathemas to the sharpers who had lightened my pockets in New York, and those who had carried off my property here, I set about making the necessary arrangements for going onward. But my freight, even thus reduced, was still sufficient to cause me much embarrassment and expense. Reader, if thou art ever doomed to cross the Isthmus of Panama, before the completion of the projected California railroad, take my advice, which is intended for the benefit of California adventurers; particularly do thou eschew evil counsellors in the way of disinterested friends, and dealers in commodities *indispensably necessary* at St. Francisco or the mines. "Man wants but little here below," and the less he takes with him on a voyage to Panama, the better. Take with you there but a small travelling trunk, and keep your eye upon that.

The bipeds of burthen were now loaded and ready for the march; and friend J. and myself bestrode our Rosinantes, hired at ten dollars each, and early in the morning we turned our faces towards the Pacific. The day was oppressively warm; the road, though mostly dry, was execrably bad—impassable for carriages, and scarcely practicable for footmen and mules. Numerous steep pitches and narrow passes were encountered, and wherever streams were to be crossed, the mud was deep and almost as adhesive as wax. Our route was plainly indicated by the carcasses of horses and mules, who had broken down under their burdens; upon which immense flocks of turkey-buzzards were feeding, and the effluvia from these putrid bodies was more strong than agreeable. Various accidents "by flood and field" beset us; several of our fellow sufferers were landed together with the beasts they bestrode, in the mud. The poor creatures, from weakness, were unable to extricate their feet from the tenacious clay, and consequently fell down, carrying with them their riders, some of whom were sprawling upon their backs, and others up to their knees in the mire, endeavoring again to set the animals upon their legs. The scene thus presented was both ludicrous and pitiable; and many who indulged in merriment at the mishaps before them, in the old fashioned phrase, "laughed on the other side of their mouths" when they a few minutes afterwards met with similar disasters.

One incident of this kind, spite of the forebodings it might have created, excited the risibility of the spectators, although its effect was far otherwise with the unfortunate one who was victimized. He was a tall man, mounted on a small pony, with his feet nearly reaching the ground. In attempting to cross one of these quagmires, his little horse had gained the opposite bank, and getting his fore-feet on solid ground, from weakness he was unable to extricate his hinder parts; while the rider, holding too taught rein, threw him over backward, himself undermost pressed deep into the mud, and in some danger of suffocation. Assistance however was instantly afforded him, and after much tugging and pulling, both horse and rider were dragged out on terra firma; past doubt, mutually rejoicing, although the former had no language to express his thanks. The latter, who was a Spaniard, did not spare his, and *gracios a dios* was repeatedly enunciated. Nothing, however, could induce him to remount, and confiding his steed to the muleteer, he footed it the rest of the way to Panama. The heat of the sun soon baked the yellow mud, with which he was covered all over, and had his renowned countryman of La Mancha happened to encounter him, he would have assuredly taken him for some knight of romance, armed *cap-a-pie*, in golden panoply.

As soon as our unfortunate precursor was drawn out of the passage, with fear and trembling we urged our horses onward, and fortunately succeeded in passing the bog: following our puffing peons up the steep and narrow passes, we could not help pitying the poor fellows as they were tugging their heavy burthens and slowly wending their way upwards. The foliage and the scenery, up the steep, are beautiful, if one was in the humor to admire them; but spent and way-worn, exhausted by heat, fatigue and debility, we were too anxious to catch a glimpse of the blue sea beyond, to contemplate with delight any intermediate object. Our aspirations were gratified at last, and we reached the summit; and I question whether the first adventurous Spaniard who toiled up the difficult ascent, was more rejoiced than we were when the Pacific lay unrolled before us. It was on the evening of the 9th of March when we took up our quarters at Panama; and we endeavored to forget, in our present safety, the past dangers we had encountered, as well as those which awaited us in future. The dreaded pass was behind us; the breath of life was in us; and with thankful hearts we hoped that better times and less dangerous scenes were in prospect.

Panama is an old Spanish city, but is not on the site of the ancient town, from whence Pizarro made his way to Peru; and anxious as we were to get on board the Oregon, we had little leisure to discover what was there worthy of observation. The beautiful bay, however, is worthy of admiration, but the water is so shoal, near the land, that vessels are unable to approach nearer than two or three miles to the beach. The town was filled to overflowing with the pilgrims of hope, *en route* for the diggings; and to see them armed to the teeth, rifle in hand, many with two pistols and a knife hanging from their belts, one would have supposed that they expected to encounter, at every step, some hydra-headed monster. They did indeed cut a most ridiculous figure; and as they strutted about in their martial garb, perhaps in the hope of captivating the dulcineas of the place, they did not fail to excite the risibilities of the señoras, who, from above their mantillas, gazed at the grotesque *hidalgos Americanos*, while their cachinations were very audible.

The desire to embark was most intense, and tickets for the steamer rose to an enormous price: even those for the steerage readily brought four hundred dollars, while three hundred dollars were paid by many for passages on board various sailing craft, some of which were scarcely worthy of any nautical designation. So great was the rush, that many adventured upon this long voyage of 3,600 miles in small vessels of fifteen or twenty tons. Many went down the coast, to Callao, in an English steamer, hoping to obtain an upward passage from that port; while hundreds allowed themselves to be huddled on board miserable vessels, not capable of accommodating one-eighth of their numbers.

On the 12th of March we were ordered on board the Oregon; and, in order to reach her, were compelled to hire *bungos*, at an expense of from one to two dollars each: and early in the morning of the 13th, after having spent nearly a month upon the isthmus, with light hearts we set sail from Panama for San Francisco. We now ran down to Taboga Island, where we took in water. This is a beautiful island, the largest in the bay; very productive; supplying Panama with vast quantities of the choicest fruit and vegetables. Vessels always water here, as Panama is deficient in that necessary; being itself supplied in a great measure from fountains, some three miles distant, by means of water-carriers, with their mules. Many went on shore at this island, in canoes, which came alongside, and returned with large quantities of fruit, in which they now fancied they could with safety indulge. We remained here two hours, when everything being on board, the wheels were again put in motion, and we laid our course South, one point West, in order to get a proper offing before bearing up for California. The weather was pleasant, and the sea calm.

As one sails from Panama, the scenery is delightful; the undulating surface and picturesque appearance of the main land in the distance, with the numerous islands with which the bay is studded, present a beautiful and attractive picture. The luxuriant trees and shrubbery of every description give a peculiar charm to the landscape; and a painter might have furnished his studio with many sketches well worthy of his pencil. Had "the gods made me poetical," I might, as Master Mathew says, "overflowed you a sonnet or two;" but though poets, in these days, are as plenty as puppy-dogs, and "namby pamby" has become a staple commodity of the country, the muses were never propitious to a matter-of-fact personage like myself.

The Oregon is a good vessel, about the tonnage of the Falcon; and both are too small (at least, we found them so,) for the comfort of passengers. Most of those now on board were from the latter ship; and as the number was increased by accessions at Panama, there must have been nearly four hundred, in the aggregate, which was enormous for so small a craft; and we were much straitened for room. One of our passengers was badly wounded in the leg, by the accidental discharge of a pistol; and several other casualties occurred on the isthmus, from the careless use of fire-arms. Some also suffered by falls and by the capsizing of canoes.

When I applied, in South-street, for a passage-ticket by the Oregon, I was informed that all the cabin tickets were disposed of: the option, therefore, of the celebrated "Mr. Hopson," was presented me; and embracing the alternative, I took one for the steerage. But to reconcile me to this step, I was informed, by Mr. Aspinwall himself, that we should have good *navy fare*, and might have all the extra meats furnished us at cost. And he farther said, that orders should be given to put up a bulk head, or partition, in order to separate such as were passengers there from necessity from those who were there from choice; and that we could have any kind of refreshment, with which the ship would be abundantly supplied, by paying for it.

The masters of passage vessels, common carriers as they are, should be selected from that class of society called *gentlemen;* and none, in my view of the subject, fall within that *category*, who have not liberality of mind enough to do their duty to the *guests* confided to their charge, according to their respective claims upon him. He should at least have sufficient intellectual capacity to enable him to *know his men*, and to distinguish between those entitled to respect and those unworthy of it.

Unfortunately, the disposition to indulge in "insolence of office" is in many minds indigenous; and nowhere does this pestiferous germ so suddenly expand as upon the quarter-deck of a vessel, be her class and condition what it may. This was fully illustrated on board the Oregon; the mind of whose master was precisely of that calibre as to become surcharged with ideas of his own vast consequence, which blinded him to the pretensions of others. Under the circumstances in which things were placed, a man of any sagacity might have known that better gentlemen than himself might be forced to take passage in the steerage; and with the least penetration he could have discovered who were thus compelled.

But the Captain seemed to imagine, those among whom accident alone had distributed tickets for the cabin, as peculiarly entitled to his regard, and to consider all *forward*, although many paid twice or thrice the amount of cabin passages, as having lost *caste*, and beneath his notice. If any order had been given to this very narrow-minded man to put up a partition in the steerage, and in other respects to consult the comfort of those within it, he disobeyed or neglected them, and even disregarded the interests of his employers by refusing to vend the commodities which were entrusted to him for that purpose.

One of my friends, a man of wealth and high consideration at home, and able to buy a baker's dozen of such "small potatoes" as the captain, ordered a bottle of cider of the steward, which was refused, because it was against orders! Surprised at this insolence, the indignant passenger made his way to the quarter-deck, and bestowed upon Captain P. a "piece of his mind," in such spicy and intelligible terms that it restored him to his senses, and induced him to revoke the order; after this, we were supplied *ad libitum*. The important functionary who was so fond of exerting his brief authority, although one of "King John's grenadiers" (i. e. five feet nothing in altitude), had a very lofty imagination, and affected to *look down* upon the passengers forward;

but many of them were not backward in returning a Rowland for his Oliver, and the frequent rubs that he met with very much improved his manners, before the passage was ended. It is much to be hoped that competition, as it has done elsewhere, will cure all these evils and abuses, and that ill usage will not hereafter be superadded to extortion on the Pacific.

The second day out, our course was west, and we took the N. E. trade winds. Whales of enormous dimensions were seen in various directions, creating surprise and excitement to all who had never before seen the Leviathan of the deep, and gave much interest to the scene. The cry was "look here!" "see there!" "look yonder!" "what are they doing?" "how they do spout up the water!"

The most vociferous of these inquirers, was my dear friend, the Vermonter, who it appears had escaped the "negro fever," and had not been carried off by alligators or sea serpents. I was right glad to see him again, as I knew his curiosity would be all alive, and was in hopes that we should have another "regular Jack" on board, with whom he would scrape acquaintance, in order to gratify it: and sure enough, I soon saw him board a sailor of the right sort, and I hastened forward in order to have the benefit of the colloquy.

"Capting," said he, "what are them orful big fish?"

"Fish you call 'em, eh?" said Jack; "well, they are submarine steamboats, such as Jonah took passage on as he was going somewhere along the Persian Gulf."

"Jonah!" echoed the Vermonter; "O now I know; they'm whales, ain't they? What almighty big fish they be!"

"Well, shipmate," replied Jack, "you may call 'em what you like, but when I was bo'swain of the Ohio, I heard the chaplin, who has pretty much overhauled the log about such matters, say that they were no more fish than he was."

"Well, I always thought that a whale was a fish," said the Vermonter.

"So did I, once," answered Jack; "but we must always live and learn."

"What in natur are they doin' on, spouting up water so; are they mad at us for coming among them?" asked the Vermonter.

"O no, thank God," said Jack, "they are only laughing. A mad whale is another guess sort of a fellow; I've seen 'em to my sorrow, and I hope I may never see any more such. But," he continued, in a serious tone, "I am afraid these steamers will meet with the rubbers one of these days."

"What for?" asked the Yankee.

"O they make such a thund'ring dashing with their wheels, and a rattling with their engines, that they wake up the whale babies, and that makes the old ones wrathy as blazes;" was the reply.

"Well, I don't think they could do much hurt if they was to try;" said the Vermonter.

"Just all you know about it;" responded Jack. "That fellow, there," he continued, pointing to a very large one near us, "would make no bones of sending us to the bottom sooner than you could say Jack Robinson, if he took a notion to do it."

"You don't say so!" said the Vermonter aghast.

"Yes I do;" was the reply. "I know what they can do, as I have found out to my cost more than once. The last time was about two months ago, when I was third mate of the Blubber, Captain Whalebone. It was somewhere about these latitudes, but rather farther to the westward;—but I don't like to tell the story."

"Du now;" said the Vermonter, "I should like to hear it."

"Well, to oblige you," says Jack, taking a fresh quid, "I'll tell it, though I had rather not. You see," he continued; "these chaps are rather cranky, and get into a devil of a flurry sometimes, and then we have to throw over some of the crew to prevent them from staving into us. You've heard about throwing a tub to a whale, have'nt you?" asked Jack.

The other assented.

"But they know better now, and nothing will do but some live animal. Well, the last voyage of the Blubber, as we were standing up the coast N. W. and by W. with our starboard tacks aboard, the lubber at the helm, not minding what he was about, run us right into a she whale, as she lay upon her back suckling twins, and cut one of the little fellows in two. Down comes her tail, and away went bowsprit and figure head, with all the for'ard hamper, and under she goes in a terrible pheeze. Very soon we found that she had been only getting an offing; for up she comes again about two cables' length off, abreast of the weather beam.

"'Stand by all hands!' said the Captain; 'let run the lee braces! hard a port!' says he to the man at the helm. This was you see to get her head round, so as she shouldn't be struck amid ship. But Lord love you! 'twas of no use, she was close aboard and made a breach at us. Letting go the lee braces, brought the ship upon her even keel, and she being pretty well down in the water, over she went just clearing the bulwarks, but carrying away the mainmast with everything aloft, and our long boat with it. I was standing near the break of the quarter-deck, and came devilish near going too.

"'Mr. Harpoon,' says the Captain to the second mate, "somebody must *go*. Where's the Kanaka?'

"That meant our cook, a Sandwich Islander, and just at that minute up he comes out of the cabin. In a jiffy Mr. Harpoon catches him by the *scruff* of the neck and the slack of his trowsers, and chucks him overboard; smack he went down the throat of the whale, and was stowed away under deck, I warrant you."

* * * * * *

At this moment, the pilot sang out—

"For'ard there! stand by to take in sail!"

"Aye, aye!" responded Jack; and nodding to the Vermonter, "I'll finish this log next watch," he said, and bustled aloft.

It was now the fifteenth of March, the weather clear and fine, and we were bearing up N. W. Not a sail had been seen since leaving Panama. The two following days the weather continued the same, the mercury, which had been at 85° since leaving port, was now at 90°. Nothing visible except the deep blue sea.

The eighteenth, being Sunday, divine service was performed on the quarter-deck. Throughout this day and the two following ones, the weather was fine, and our course continued the same. On the twenty-first, the wind hauled round ahead, and the weather grew cooler. The land had been seen during the day, and at night, the fires of the volcanoes of Mexico were visible. A poor fellow had the misfortune to fall from aloft and break his leg. A subscription was therefore set on foot, and an hundred dollars was raised for his benefit. The twenty-second was fair and the weather hotter; and the high lands of Mexico were now distinctly seen.

We were now near enough to the coast to remark the varying beauty of the landscape. The scenery was sublime, and the eye never tired with gazing upon it. Description of the works of nature is not my *forte*, and I will not attempt to portray that which enchanted all beholders, and caused us to forget past hardships, as well as the apprehension of those yet in store for us.

We were fast nearing the port of San Blas, in Mexico, and soon the masts of the vessels at anchor there began to heave in sight, and between four and five o'clock in the afternoon—passing a small village on the coast—we reached the anchorage and came to. Here we expected to hear something of the "land of promise," and all were anxious to get on shore for that purpose.

CHAPTER III.

San Blas—News from the Gold Region—flattering accounts—sanguine hopes—cobwebs of skepticism brushed away—dream of fancy—impatience to reach the mines—land of San Blas—town described—Spanish customs—population—mixed breeds—curious table of races, from Twiss' travels—find countrymen who came by Vera Cruz—story of a fight on the way—markets—sail from San Blas—more passengers—a Californian from the mines—bored for information—the Vermonter again—the whale story—charcoal sketch of sailor—log continued—nautical polemics—Vermonter skeptical—voyage continued along the coast—put into San Diego—land the mail—prodigious number of *grass widows*—departure—droves of horses and cattle in sight—run into Monterey in the night—caution to prevent desertion—carpenter throws himself overboard, and escapes—reach the bay of San Francisco—glittering appearance of the hills—anchor at Sancilito—inclination of the captain to land us there—passengers refuse—run up to San Francisco—first view of the city—another effort of the captain to gouge us—passengers refuse to be starved ashore—captain gives way—land in the night—tent lodging on the ground in California.

At San Blas, we found a ship loaded with coal, for the supply of the steamers; and a brig bound downward, directly from San Francisco, after a passage of sixteen days. Two smaller vessels were here also, fitting out for the north, with passengers and provisions for the mines. We were soon boarded by the captains of the coaler and brig; and with the latter came a young man in the employ of Howland & Aspinwall, who had but two days before arrived from *El Dorado*. He was at once surrounded by everybody, eager to behold with their own eyes a *live man* from the gold regions—and with their own ears to hear him descant upon the abundance of the glittering treasure represented to be so profusely scattered over the land. Innumerable questions were thrust upon him—the half of which he could not answer, before he was deluged with a fresh torrent. I cannot go into the particulars of his statements, but his reports of the quantities of gold already obtained, and those which might be expected, seemed highly *embroidered*. He more than confirmed all the stories in circulation, and raised expectation to the highest pitch. Hundreds stood looking over the heads of others, their mouths and eyes and ears wide open, to catch the words "pounds,"—"hundreds of pounds,"—"vast quantities,"—"immense heaps,"—"extraordinary abundance," &c.; the speaker rejecting the inconsiderable terms of "ounce" or "ounces!"

Some seemed rather inclined to doubt his statements; but others would say, "He is in the employ of Howland & Aswinwall—he must be a respectable man. He has just come from the country, and can have no object in deceiving us. Why not put confidence in his declarations!" Finally, all began to be in the true faith, and to forget the various mishaps which had befallen them thus far, and felt disposed to take the chance of prospective disaster. The countenances of the brotherhood of adventurers brightened up—their eyes glistened. In the dreams of fancy, they were already rich—and perhaps some, over sanguine, began to devise methods of spending the fortunes which they were so soon and so easily to amass. Already they seemed compensated for their trials on the Falcon and on the Isthmus, as well as for the petty insolences of the commander of the Oregon. Here we also learned that the steamer California was at San Francisco, deserted by her crew, who were already scooping up the *dust* at the placers.

The Mexican officers of the customs came on board, and kindly permitted us to go on shore at will. Some went off immediately; and on the 23d, with a party of friends, I entered a *dug-out*, many of which came alongside for employment; and early the next morning, for the first time, I planted my foot upon Mexican soil, not a little pleased to be once more on *terra firma*. On entering the town, the first thing was to refresh the inward man with a cup of coffee and a piece of bread, and then, with a cigar in my mouth, to stroll around and see what San Blas was made of. The houses were chiefly of clay, cane, or *adobas*, (sun-dried bricks;) and the population estimated at about a thousand.

The old Spanish town is on the high land back of the present one, (which is upon the terrace below it,) and contains a large church of stone, with other buildings, public and private, of the same material, but which are now in a dilapidated state. Having satisfied our curiosity, we breakfasted between nine and ten o'clock. This is the usual hour in Spanish countries, where the custom is to take a cup of coffee and a cigar on rising, and "'bide their time" for more substantial fare. The dinner-hour is four o'clock: no tea or supper follow, and the meals are over for the day.

The remainder of the day was spent in reconnoitering the natives. These are mostly (as is the case throughout Mexico,) half-breeds, or a mixture of the Spanish race with those of Indians and negroes. The people of Spain and Mexico have a curious table of the various people produced by different connections, amounting, I think, to fourteen removes; and after that—although the complexion denotes the entire absence of African blood—a conjunction between two of this remote race produces a perfect negro! I am not sure that I am entirely accurate in this statement, but the curious reader will find the table in Twiss' "Travels in Portugal and Spain."

Many of our people took saddle-horses, and rode into the country others played at *Monté* with the Mexicans, whom they found no novices, and paid well for the discovery! and other some, amused themselves in attempting to converse with the señoras and señoritas; thus killing time, and murdering the Spanish language, at the same effort. We found here quite a number of our countrymen, who had come across Mexico from Vera Cruz—and among them some of Captain Hutton's party; from whom we learned, that, on the route, they had had a "regular row" with the natives at a *fandango*—which proved fatal to many of these, while some of the Americans were severely wounded.

An individual of the party concerned, in his version of the story, said, the Mexicans commenced the fight, by striking one of the emigrants over the head with a sword, by which he was badly hurt; and that they, in return, fired a volley, indiscriminately, among the natives; and a general battle began, which continued until the aggressors were driven from the field, bearing off their killed and wounded. Many more of the natives would have suffered, had not their adversaries been "very particularly drunk," and their visual nerves too much deranged for accurate aim. The cause assigned by the narrator, was the jealousy of the Mexicans—the señoritas preferring the fresh-looking Yankees to their swarthy countrymen; and, in this respect, it cannot be denied that their taste was commendable!

At San Blas we had opportunities of transmitting letters to our friends at home, of which I did not fail to avail myself; and finding that much time would be required to take our coal and water on board, I made the most of my opportunities of visiting the surrounding country—which is not very interesting. There is a town called Tepic, some fifty miles in the interior, which was said to be worth visiting; but, as so wide an excursion could not be taken without endangering the loss of my passage, I did not venture to indulge my curiosity. I found leisure, however, to visit their markets, where all kinds of tropical fruits were vended—now at very high prices, it being the custom here, as elsewhere, to put high *imposts* upon foreigners, and to increase the tariff in proportion to the inexperience of their customers.

Our lading being completed, we left the port of San Blas at five o'clock on the morning of the 25th March, with an addition to our number of three Americans who had come across the country, and a Spaniard, who resided in California, and who had been to the placers. The Californian was not bored so much as he would have been had he spoken English, but occasionally, some one, who, having conned his Olendorf on the passage, and had gained a little Spanish, would monopolise his attention, and pump him for information with that ingenuity and perseverance so peculiar to Yankees.

For several days before our arrival at San Blas I had seen nothing of my friend the Vermonter, and did not get sight of him until I found him leaning on my shoulder, listening to the flattering accounts of the employé of the owners of the Oregon. Upon none of the passengers did his story have a more exhilarating effect than upon him; and he seemed highly elated. The next time I beheld him was in the afternoon of the day we left San Blas, edging his way forward, and in the hope that he had not yet got the *whole* of Jack's yarn; to use a nautical phrase, "I fell in his wake," and to my great satisfaction was close along side, when we encountered the quondam third mate of the Blubber. "Haloo, Capting!" said my companion, losing his former diffidence; "Now is a good time to finish that whale story." "Why, aye," said

Jack, spouting out a stream of tobacco-juice, "it's as good a time as any; but whereabouts did I bring up?" This question was not understood by my companion; and thinking that Jack had lost the "thread of his discourse," I was determined to help him at the pinch. "It was when the whale had made a lunch through you amid-ship, and carried away your mainmast," I said. "And just after Captain Whalebone, and Mr. Harpoon, the second mate, threw the cook overboard," chimed in my companion. "O, aye," said Jack, "I remember."

All regular tars are largely gifted with the *improvisto* talent, and most generally excel in the manner of delivering their yarns. Our friend, Marlinspike, was not behind any I had ever met with, in matter or in mode, and his queer phis was enough to make you attentive, even when he fell off a little in the interest of his narrative. He was inordinately addicted to tobacco, and indulged his nose as well as his mouth, with the fragrant weed. From every indication, he was also addicted to another nautical passion, never omitting an opportunity to "splice the main-brace," or "freshen his nip," come what might of the indulgence.

For the convenience of more frequently supplying his nostrils, he carried his high-dried Scotch in a leathern pocket, from whence it was without difficulty obtained, and his pinches seemed more frequent the loftier the flight he was taking, as if for the purpose of keeping his imagination on the wing.

"Well, you see," he began, "we all turned to, with a will, to set matters right aboard the Dolly——"

"I thought you said her name was the Blubber," said the matter of fact Vermonter.

"Right!" said Jack: "right as my left leg. But we sailors call the ship after our sweethearts, and they are pretty much all Dollys. But hows'ever, we rigged in the rest of the bowsprit, and got the sails forrard in order, and then set to, and got up the mainmast, which was broke off close to the decks, and then with a spare top-mast, we set a jury aloft. This spar was badly sprung, but we made a very good fish of it——"

"Make a fish of a mast!" said the Vermonter: "Who ever heard of such a thing? And why couldn't the jury set on deck?" he added.

"I'll tell you what, shipmate," replied Jack, "if you keep steering thwart my hause, in this way, you'll put me out in my reckoning, and we shan't get through in a month of Sundays, so just you haul in the slack of your jaw and belay." This was said in a tone which silenced the inquirer, and Jack proceeded.

"Well, we were soon a-taunt-o, and although we could not spread the main course without double reefing, the wind being fresh and fair, we pushed a-head, and in five or six days we got into San Francisco, where the Captain expected to get off considerable of the cargo, as oil was scarce and high; and while he and the second mate went ashore to make the bargain, it being the chief mate's watch, I took the yawl, and sculled her over to Bird Island to get a few gulls, and some noddies' eggs. Well, as I was sculling, you know, I couldn't see a-head, but as we neared the land somebody hailed, 'Halloo, Mr. Marlinspike,' said he. I turned about, and my eyes! if there wan't our Kanaka, dancing about as if the devil was in him.

"'Splinter my mizzen, Cockeye!' said I, 'is that you?'

"You see I called him Cockeye: Jiggeraboo was his true name; but one of his eyes being set fore and aft in his head, and to'ther braced sharp up into the wind, he always looked nine ways for Sunday.

"'Me, sure enough, sir,' said Cockeye.

"'Why, how the devil did you get here? You must have had a quicker passage than we had.'

"'I rather think I had,' said he, grinning. 'By my reckoning it must have been about twenty-four hours, as I began to get hungry as a shark, when I heard a thundering big gun, and I knew I was somewhere in the wake of the Commodore, and about twelve hours after, *boom* came another—very near. This set me in good spirits, and I began to caper about, tickling the ribs of the old b—— of a whale with a kick or two, which set her a-laughing, and with a heave she sent me through her gullet in no time. She wasn't very low down, and I got my head above water in a little while, and finding myself off the chops of the bay, I pulled in, and made a landing here.'

"'Well, Cockeye,' said I, 'what have you been about?'

"'I'll show you,' said he, as he took me to a big hole in the sand, where was a boat-load of bird's eggs, and dried noddies enough to victual a ship's crew a fortnight. 'I mean,' says he, 'to get them over to the landing, and set up a galley there.'

"'A good notion,' said I, 'and I don't care if I lend you a lift, but you must give old Whalebone a wide berth, or he'll claim you as a deserter.'

"'That I will,' said the Kanaka.

"Well, you see I took him with part of his cargo over, and set him ashore; he got craft to go over and fetch the rest, and he soon got into great business; but about ten days afterwards I went ashore with the Captain, when, at the turning of a corner, we were close aboard of the Kanaka.

"'Blast my eyes!' said the Captain, 'you copper-colored rascal, what the devil do you mean, sky-larking about here. Go a-board to your duty, or I'll send you in ruffles a-board the Commodore.'

"'I shan't do any more duty o'board the Blubber, Captain Whalebone,' said Cockeye; 'you've discharged me.'

"'You won't, hey!' said the Captain.

"Just that moment Harpoon hove in sight, and he and the Captain made a prize of poor Cockeye, and hauled him off to the Ohio.

"The next day I was sent for, and on the quarter-deck found Captain Jones in his iron-bound coat, and the Captain and the Kanaka standing on the larboard side. The Commodore knew me at once, for I was aboard his ship when he took Monterey in such a hurry, when old Hickory was President. 'Well, Mr. Marlinspike,' said he to me, 'tell what you know about this affair.' So I told all about it, and gave the time the Kanaka came aboard, and how he was pitched over the side; and as it was all true, you know, it agreed with the log of Cockeye.

"'Captain Whalebone,' said the Commodore, 'all you have to do with this man is to pay him the wages due him; and see you do it, or it may be worse for you:' and that ended the examination aboard of the Ohio.

"'Well, that was a righteous judgment, any how,' said the Vermonter.

"'Righteous!' said Jack, 'to be sure it was. Let old Catesby Jones alone for clearing a jam, and giving every man his due. Why, he's a chip of old Paul, who bang'd the British in the old war, and knows his duty ashore or afloat, as well as any man who ever trod the quarter-deck of a line of battle ship, and that is saying as much as can be said.'

"'Well, Mister,' said the Vermonter, 'I rather guess you're poking fun at me. You don't expect I'll believe the story of your finding the Kanaka alive, do you?'

"'Why not?' replied Jack: 'Do you read your Bible? How long was Jonah stowed away in a craft of that kind?'

"'Well, three days and nights, the book says,' was the answer.

"'The book says!' replied Jack; 'and don't you believe it, you heathen? Where do you expect to go one of these days, if you go for to say, the great log-book an't true?'

"'Well, I don't say the Bible an't true,' said the other; 'but that was in the old times.'

"'What o' that?' said Jack. 'If Jonah, who was a landsman, and never off soundings in his life before, could be in a whale's belly three days and nights, don't you think that a Kanaka, who is web-footed, and is generally born in the waters, where, as soon as they open their eyes, they swim about like young alligators, could stand it half that time?'

The Vermonter had no time to answer. The order to take in sail was given, and Jack was on duty in no time.

On the morning of the 26th we made Cape San Lucas, and coasted Lower California the whole day, the weather becoming cool and cooler as we ran northwardly. The two next days the wind headed us, and the mercury fell to 58 degrees. Our course was in sight of several very beautiful islands. The next day the wind fell, but the sea was high, and we ranged along the coast, keeping the land in sight; and on the morning of the 30th, we ran into the Bay of San Diego, a beautiful harbor, and the first port in Alta California.

The master of the Oregon had never been up the coast, and therefore was glad to avail himself of the experience of an old whaler who was well acquainted with it. This personage had purchased land around San Diego, and lots in San Francisco, and its neighborhood, before the discovery of the gold, and when that event occurred, the fortunate captain found that he had struck a whale of some magnitude, for by the common rise of property at those places, he is likely soon to become a millionaire.

The town of San Diego is small, situated at the head of the bay, and contains large hide-houses; hides and tallow having formerly been the principal exports of the country, until gold became the staple. Here we found a brig bound from Valparaiso to San Francisco, which had put in in distress. It was reported that there were five hundred women in the town, and no men! the latter having gone to the diggings, consequently, we did not think it safe to land: so leaving the mail among the *females*, we let on steam and pushed ahead, sailing along the coast so near that we could see large droves of horses and cattle feeding on the green hills, presenting a most agreeable and interesting spectacle. I will here observe, that although these droves rove at large, each one has its proper owner. The proprietors of ranchos in California, annually collect their several herds, and brand the colts and calves produced within the season. Whenever an animal is wanted, a Californian (than whom the world can produce no better horsemen) mounts a fleet and well-trained horse, with his lasso secured to the saddle, and selecting the object desired, spurs towards it, and at the proper distance, hurls the noose so as to catch the ox by the horns, or the horse by the neck or head, at pleasure; and soon the animal, plunge and resist as it may, is brought under the control of his captor.

The 31st, was wet and foggy, and we ran into Monterey, about 11 o'clock at night. The captain was afraid of sending his men on shore with the mails, lest they should scatter for the mines, and he therefore engaged some passengers to row the boat to the landing. As the ship was about getting under weigh, the carpenter, passing over the night-heads, unobserved by the officer, let himself down into the water and struck out for the shore. The night was dark, and the distance to the land being by no means inconsiderable, we all thought he must sacrifice his life in his haste to reach the diggings; but I afterwards learned that he landed in safety.

On Sunday morning, the 1st of April, to the delight of all, and especially, of those in the steerage, we entered the bay of San Francisco. All eyes were strained to see how the land appeared. The hills on each side of the entrance were covered with yellow flowers, and after the huge stories which we had read and heard, which seemed confirmed by the clerk of Messrs. Howland and Aspinwall, at San Blas; it required no great stretch of fancy to imagine these hills covered with veritable gold. "Sure enough!" was the simultaneous exclamation; "see the gold lying on the surface of those hills! Won't we soon be into them and secure our 'piles.'"

Fearing the desertion of his men, the Captain of the Oregon cast anchor at Sancilito, under the guns of the Ohio and several other vessels of war riding there; and several sailors, for refusing to do duty, 2

were transferred in irons to the Commodore's ship. This anchorage is about ten miles from San Francisco, and here good water can be obtained for vessels going to sea.

Captain P. now made a contract with a lighter-man to come alongside and take off his passengers. They were as wide awake as the Captain. The contract was to land them at San Francisco, and all refused to go on board unless he would agree to take them there. This he refused to do without extra pay,—and as neither threats nor persuasions could shake the resolve of the passengers, the lighter was dismissed, with a *California compensation* for his trouble.

On the following morning, orders came from the agent to run the Oregon up to town, which being obeyed, we soon had an opportunity to take a look at the far-famed city of San Francisco, and as we had it fairly in sight—"Not much of a city after all," burst from many around me. The California was lying here, nearly deserted by officers and men; and many other vessels at the anchorage had not even a hand on board.

It was necessary to obtain permits to land our effects, and these being procured, our little captain insisted that we should get ourselves and baggage ashore as well as we could, at our own charges; but all refused to leave the vessel unless landed at his expense. He then tried to starve us out; ordered the galley fires extinguished, and that nothing more should be cooked. It was all of no avail; the passengers stuck to him as close as if they had loved him dearly. At length *his* patience gave way, and "brim full of wrath and cabbage," he procured lighters and boats and trundled us all ashore, bag and baggage. And now I shall take my leave of Captain P., in the fervent hope that I may never be so unfortunate as to make another voyage under such an epitome of a man, mind and body.

While a friend went ashore in order to obtain poles to enable us to pitch my tent, I was engaged until late in the evening in the transference of my baggage, and did not reach shore until ten o'clock. The wind in the afternoon had been blowing from the N. W., and the weather was cold, and to us just arrived from a warmer region, it was exceedingly uncomfortable even in our winter clothes and overcoats. When I was fairly landed, I made some effort to find my friend with the tent poles, but discovered that he was not to be found, but was waiting my arrival with the tent some distance off. It was dark and most distressingly cold, and we were both obliged to remain shelterless. It was a dark and dreary night, so cold that I could not lie down, and so dark that I could not safely walk about, and I thought that if such was to be the life of a Californian, I had already seen enough of it. The darkness increased and seemed to be interminable. But there is an end to all sublunary things, so, thought I, there must be to my first night on the soil of California. A streak of light appeared in the east—the hope of dawn—it increased—Aurora showed her ever-welcome face—and finally, old Sol himself burst forth in all his splendor.

CHAPTER IV.

Confab with the reader—extravagance of prices—difference of opinion with regard to the placers—difficulty of reaching them—increase prospectively—our patent medicines condemned—description of San Francisco and the environs—islands in the bay—goats—birds—Angel Island—gambling and gambling houses—enormous fortunes made by the first merchant adventurers—the greatest part of the gold sent to England—want of ware-houses—price of lots—precarious titles—Benecia—its great advantages over San Francisco—tariff of necessaries—Oregon and California sail for Panama—preparation to depart—take passage on the *Placer* for the Embarkadero—voyage commenced—skipper and passengers described—beautiful scenery—Placer grounds—hubbub among the passengers—unsuccessful effort to get off the bank—cargo landed—Placer hauled off—obstinacy of the pilot—its consequences—pilot superseded—vessel floated off and pursues her way—Benecia—and its prospects—enter the Sacramento—crooked navigation—warping upwards—climate milder—unpromising appearance of the country—shocking news from the placers—my companion sees enough of the elephant and returns—many sites for cities—Montezuma—New York—Sutter—arrival at the Embarkadero—change of name to Sacramento City—preposterous nomenclature—pitch my tent.

READER, we have made a long voyage together: suppose we stop awhile, let off steam, and chat a little. You have doubtless long since discovered that I am no professed writer of books. And here I assure you that my object in attempting this one is neither to acquire fame or profit, but simply to impart information which may be useful to adventurers hereafter. I mean to state the truth, and only the truth, in language comprehensible, but unadorned. In our journey to this place we have seen but a small part of the elephant—scarcely the tip of the ear; but have patience, and continue with me to the end of my narrative, and I promise you a full view of the entire animal.

And, O dear reader, congratulate yourself on the advantage which you possess of making this journey at so little cost and trouble; and while setting by your comfortable grate, in your Boston rocker, inhaling the precious aroma of your pure *Habana*, think of the difficulties I have encountered, and of the great pains I am taking to lay these adventures before you. And let me crave your indulgence for my homely style, and beg you to consider that those travellers who write according to the strictest rules of rhetoric, whose language flows easily, and whose periods are so well rounded, are those most inclined to "draw the long bow." For it cannot be denied that most fluent writers, either of history or travels, whose imaginations are fertile, are too prone to invention, in order to increase the interest of their writings. Not so with me, who study truth alone. I supplicate you, therefore, to pass over my numerous faults, and not to waste time in criticising my production.

And now, gentle reader, we will, if it so pleaseth thee, jog on together.

The genial rays of the sun soon rendered my stiffened limbs more pliable, and I set off in quest of my friend, whom I found at last in no pleasant humor, and his "lodging upon the cold ground," had not rendered him more in love with "life in California," than I had imbibed in my uncomfortable vigil. Our tent was soon pitched, and the baggage stowed away, and we both departed to seek a *restaurant.* This done, and our hunger appeased at the moderate cost of a dollar and fifty cents each, we began to feel less wolfish, and more disposed to take a more pleasant view of the prospect before us.

The first thing that strikes an emigrant to California is the enormous prices demanded for all commodities. By degrees, however, he becomes accustomed to this, and forks over his *five* or his *ten*, as cheerfully as he would a much smaller sum in the Atlantic states, and even considers himself lucky to obtain what he needs at any price within his means.

When we came to make inquiry for quarters, we found no lodging could be had at all; and as four dollars and a half a day was somewhat extravagant for board without it, we concluded, as did the most of our fellow passengers, to occupy our canvass houses, and to cater and cook for ourselves. Some, however, who came out with us, went immediately to the placers, but I concluded to remain sometime to obtain information as to the position of the diggings, in order to choose the one likely to be most productive.

The vast amount of gold which I saw in the offices of the brokers, and in the gambling-houses, in the form of dust, scales, and large lumps, as well as the innumerable bags of the precious metal continually brought in by the miners and traders, soon convinced me that the abundance of the gold had not been over estimated; and the desideratum next to be sought was where to begin operations. For this purpose I made inquiries of various persons of experience, in regard to the best diggings, the means of getting to them, the modus operandi after they were reached, and other matters germain to the occasion. And, though all differed as to the best locations, they all agreed that access to them was difficult and dangerous, food scarce and bad, and living enormously expensive, while the labor which it was necessary to exercise was painful and severe. And there was not one of them who did not pronounce that all our so much-lauded patent gold washing machines, and some other articles which we had brought with us, entirely useless: the tin pan and the rocker were alone serviceable.

With respect to the placers, some recommended the San Joaquin and its tributaries, from which about this time were received glowing accounts of large lumps easily attained. The route thither was by ship navigation to Stockton, thence by land some eighty or an hundred miles to the diggings. Passage twenty dollars, and in the Irish phrase, "*eat yourself,*" and what was left of you the musquitoes were very likely to devour. Freight by water five dollars a hundred, and by land as far as teams could go, forty of fifty cents a pound; and for the remainder of the way, in which it was to be carried in packs on the backs of footmen, an increased price in proportion. Others would recommend the affluents of the Sacramento, the forks of the American, the Juba and Feather rivers, and each presented no pleasing picture in describing the difficulties sure to be met with. Having thus *carte du pays*, I was resolved to take time for deliberation, and consequently I remained collecting information and gradually preparing for the voyage ten days longer at San Francisco.

This place is situated on the west side of the bay, and on our arrival it contained but few buildings. There is a large square in the centre, called Portsmouth, on which is situated the custom-house and a school-house, used for a church and court-house. The Parker Hotel, a large house, fronts on the east side, and the city hotel is on the south side, on Kearney-street, with Clay-street between them. The ground, which is thin and sandy, rises in the rear of the town, and the land at some distance is high and uneven. No timber land is seen in any direction, nor any kind of vegetation, except a few scrubby bushes. Fire wood, which is brought in on mules by the native Californians, is scarce and dear, selling at forty or fifty dollars a cord; and though much needed to impart warmth to the body, it is used only for culinary purposes.

There are a number of barren and uninhabited islands in the bay, and one directly opposite to the town, some of which are frequented by aquatic fowl of various descriptions, as well as others of the feathered creation, which roost upon and hover over them. There is one however, called Goat Island, stocked with the animals from which it takes its name. All may have some particular designation, but Bird Island and a larger one in its neighborhood, called Angel Island, were all that I recollect to have heard named. Whether this last is as appropriately christened as the former, I had no means of ascertaining. I devoutly hope, however, that if peopled with immortals, they will prove of the benevolent species, or the *topaz* order, for of the *ebony* race California is more than sufficiently provided.

The pernicious and detestable passion of gambling is here indulged to an enormous extent, and blacklegs of all colors and nations are on the alert, to ease the besotted fools, who congregate in the sinks of vice scattered about, of their hard-earned gold. It is not unusual for these reckless mortals to lose a handsome fortune at a sitting; and one poor idiot, an old man too, was stripped of sixteen thousand dollars, all he had, in four days, at the game of monté.

Most of the business men at this time were Americans and Englishmen; many of the latter, previously to the discovery of the gold, had been engaged in commerce at the Sandwich Islands, along the coast of Mexico, at Callao, or Valparaiso, who upon receiving news of the discovery, packed up every thing, and with their *Lares* crowded into San Francisco. There they sold their goods at enormous profits, purchasing land at nominal prices, and selling part at extravagant advance; they have laid the foundation of fortunes, which in some cases may in time rival that amassed by "the great merchant duke," John Jacob Astor.

In consequence, heaps on heaps of California gold has, through the hands of British merchants, found its way to England; I venture to say that not one-fifth, and perhaps not one-tenth part, of the metal brought from the placers, has reached the Atlantic States.

San Francisco on my arrival was filled with merchandize; boxes, bales, and packages of every description were strewed about, and barrels of liquors and provisions were piled up in the streets; and strange as it may seem, no complaints were made of losses and theft. Town lots had reached prices from five to fifteen thousand dollars each; and even at those rates, the venders would not warrant the title; and the madness of the multitude may be conceived, when they would pay such sums for unimproved lots, with titles so precarious.

A rival town had recently began to be erected about thirty miles from San Francisco, called Benecia, on Sussam Bay, which, if reports be true, possesses immense advantages above San Francisco. There large vessels can come close in shore, and without the aid of wharf or pier, discharge their lading upon the dry bank, with trifling expense and little labor; on the other hand, charges for lighterage in many cases exceed the cost of freight from the Atlantic ports.

The distance to the diggings and the high charges for transportation, oblige all to reduce the quantity of their luggage as much as possible, and sales were made of such as was saleable, while much property costing large sums, was thrown away, included in which were the various celebrated and wonderful *washers*, constructed by artists who had perhaps never seen an ounce of gold in their lives, until it was counted down to them by their credulous customers. These sharpers found *their* El dorado in their talent for misrepresentation, and in the gullability of credulous adventurers, who were to seek it abroad at the peril of their lives. In spite of warning, however, some of these articles were taken as far as Stockton, but thrown away at last, and none were ever used or usable at the placers.

The following tariff of prices will show the cost of living in California: Beef 1*s.* 6*d.*, ham 5*s.*, pork 3*s.*, salaratus $14 per pound; bakers' bread 2*s.* small loaf; eggs $3 per dozen; brandy $3 to $4 per bottle; ale $2; Allen's revolvers $60 to $80, Colt's large $150; good blankets $15 to $20 per pair; powder $10 per pound; lumber $300 per thousand feet. The charge for washing was $1 a piece. Carpenters' wages $14 a dry; laborers' $8. But if the persons who received these prices were deemed extravagant in their demands, the owners of light boats and launches went far beyond them, and their charges for services were truly extortionate. The amiable Captain P. of the Oregon took his departure downward on the 12th of April; and the California having obtained at high wages men enough to man her, sailed the day afterward.

I had stuffed my knowledge box with all the information that could be obtained, and I proceeded to stow away as much provision as my haversack could hold, and shipping my baggage and myself on board the schooner Placer, for the privilege of sleeping on the deck of which, finding my own *bed clothes*, I paid twenty-five dollars, beside California charges on the sorry remains of my expensive outfit, determined, God willing, as the old bills of lading have it, to proceed up the Sacramento to the Embarkadero, and thence to Sutter's Mill, on the south fork of the American river.

The programme of the voyage issued by the captain of the Placer, announced that she was *positively* to sail in two days; but like all other bulletins, proved unreliable. He continued to linger from day to day, to collect more passengers and freight. At length we went on board on the 12th April, in the afternoon, under the expectation of taking advantage of a fair wind upward. But the pilot did not come on board until next morning; and as the night approached, the weather grew cold and gusty. Wrapping myself in my blankets, and crowding myself close under the weather bulwark, I stretched myself on the quarter-deck—the canopy of heaven for my curtains, with the blasts of old Boreas for my lullaby, and composed myself to sleep.

After a night somewhat of the longest, day came at last, and with it the laggard of a pilot. The anchor was got up, sails set, and we bowsed away up the bay of San Francisco. The Placer was a good vessel of her class, and being heavily laden, drew nine feet of water, but even with this draft, could have ascended the Sacramento safely, if she had been kept in the proper channel. Our skipper was a Dutchman, but could speak both English and Spanish, in his own way, but not very intelligibly. The supercargo was a German, a young man, and well educated, who had emigrated to Valparaiso, where he had for some time been engaged in commerce, but had been brought by the general current to California. He spoke Spanish well, and understood English, but murdered it sadly, when attempting to speak it. The pilot was an American, who had been some years in California—a fine looking fellow, but not *au fait* in his business. But although his knowledge was scanty, his pretensions were exorbitant; and he demanded five hundred dollars for the upward trip, and three hundred for the return voyage. The cook, who when not at the galley, did duty as a sailor, was a Chilian, as were most of the other hands—and a most stupid set they were. The cook, *par excellence*, bore the palm from the rest, and in the exercise of his art, showed less expertness than when managing sheets and braces on deck; but the captain and his supercargo cared little about the viands served up to them, and less for the taste of their passengers. And had that *gentleman*, who is said to be the principal contractor for *cooks*, furnished even a worse one than the Chilian, they would not have remonstrated.

Our passengers were from all parts of the globe: Dutch, English, Irish, Scots, French, Peruvians, Mexicans, Chilians, Sandwich Islanders, Oregonians—some from the Atlantic states, and even from New South Wales. The hold was crammed with freight, and the passengers so crowded the deck, that at night, when we chose to place ourselves in a horizontal position, we were compelled to stow ourselves away, "heads and points," like a quintal of stock fish.

The morning of our departure was pleasant; and when all hands came to be piped to breakfast, the motley group engaged in the discussion of the morning meal, with the heterogeneous mass of provender, composing their refection, formed a scene for the pencil of a Hogarth. Neither butter, bread, eggs, or other customary edibles were forthcoming; but the poor sinners were hard at work, with their masticators, upon the stale and solid sour biscuit, wrinkled jerk beef, tough as the tripe of Handy Andy, which was made from the waistband of an old pair of leathern breeches, with rusty bacon, of a very ferruginous aspect, and "an ancient and fish-like smell." Those who luxuriated in cheese, very animated as it was, or in red herrings of exceeding *tenderness*, wore more pleasant countenances, but none would have been taken for disciples of Momus, as *il penseroso* predominated in every aspect.

I was better provided; some boiled ham and Bologna sausage, the remainder of the stores I had brought from home, with the freshest pilot bread I could procure at San Francisco, were taken from my knapsack, with a flask of claret, to assist deglutition; and with these I comforted myself, very willing to dispense with coffee, such as would have been concocted by the cook, had an attempt been made to produce it.

The repast over, we had leisure to view the scenery on the bay. It was the season when the country is seen to the best advantage: the trees had acquired their richest foliage—and the land beautifully undulating, was covered with verdure, interspersed with flowers of the brightest hues. The prospect was delightful, and reviving to our spirits—jaded by the comfortless lodging of the night before. While yet we were enjoying the pleasing prospect on all sides spread around us, the Placer was suddenly brought up all standing upon a sand bank. The pilot stood aghast: the skipper and the supercargo spluttered and swore in Dutch, high and low, and anathemas were showered upon the unskilful Palinarius, by the multifarious passengers, in all languages known to modern linguists. No conception of the confusion at Babel could be formed by the most vivid imagination, half equal to the reality which sounded in our ears, in the jarring and discord which ensued our unfortunate adventure.

A degree of order was at length restored. The anchor was carried out, and passengers aided in the endeavor to haul the Placer off the bar, but it was like the attempt to lift one's self by the waistband. We were fast anchored without the help of our mud-hooks, and nothing was left us but to await with what patience we could muster the rising of the tide. Meanwhile, most of us went on shore; some with rifles, in the hope of finding game, and others to seek such sport as they might choose to indulge in. For myself, I amused myself with setting on fire the tulies or rushes, which, when extensively ignited, made a beautiful and splendid appearance. At the top of the tide, we made another vain attempt to haul off, into the deep water, but every effort was unsuccessful, and we remained fast three days, with the tantalizing spectacle of vessels of deeper draught, under better pilots, passing up and down without difficulty.

At this juncture it was determined to do, what should have been done at first. A part of the cargo was landed, and at the next flood, a "long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together," got the Placer afloat. The freight was re-shipped, and we got under way. The pilot was endued with obstinacy, in proportion to his ignorance, and he persisted that there was water enough in the channel he had chosen, and would not be counselled to abandon it for another. The result soon exhibited itself: smack went the Placer again into the mud, and the former scene was re-enacted. It was enough to exhaust the patience of anybody, especially that of a gold hunter, so near the diggings, the object of his ardent hopes, and eager to begin his toils: fearing, perhaps, that the harvest would be gathered in without his being able to participate; and curses loud, deep, and reiterated sounded from all quarters. One old salt in particular did not fail to give the captain and his Palinarius a nautical jobation, well garnished with expletives from his copious vocabulary—at the same time pointing out the course which ought to be pursued, and offering the aid of his experience. The captain profited by this homily; and losing confidence in the pilot, whom he pronounced in Netherlandish, a *schelm* and a *kork on beden*, he availed himself of the skill of his objurgator, and put the vessel under his direction. The Placer was soon hauled off, and conducted into a new channel, where there was plenty of water, and we went on our way rejoicing.

As we passed Sussum Bay, we had a view of Benecia, the new city; and its position seemed well chosen for a large commercial town. The Napa Creek, which drains the valley of that name—the finest and most productive district in California—falls into the bay, and brings with it many advantages. The harbor is good for vessels of all sizes; and the site of the town is surrounded by a beautiful and fertile country; and—what is a good desideratum—the titles to the land are unquestionable. At this time it was in its infancy; but when I visited it, some months afterwards, it had grown apace, and promises, at no distant day, to take the lead of San Francisco. The government navy yard has been established there; and the proprietor of the town and lands adjacent has given the proceeds of a lucrative ferry, and made liberal donations of land, for the endowment of a college, academies, and for educational purposes generally.

By slow degrees, we worked our way into the Sacramento, the mouth of which is difficult to find, except by persons of some experience in such navigation. Passing the mouth of the San Joaquin, the valley of which leads to the southern mines, we worked our way onward. This river is exceedingly crooked—and often, when running up with a fair wind, a sudden bend would compel us to alter our course, so as to be taken "all aback." In these conjunctures, it is necessary to warp the vessel forward, by means of a rope attached to trees on shore. Our passengers, eager to get a-h[illegible]d, assisted the crew in thus dragging the vessel from tree to tree, un[illegible]nother bend was reached, when the sails could be used. This mode of navigation may be compared to that of the Irishman who was indulged with the privilege of working his passage on the canal, when he was put to following the horses on the towing-path, to keep them in motion; and who sagely concluded, that if it was not for the name of going by water, he might as well be "paddling the hoof" on foot! Occasionally, our rigging aloft would get foul of the branches of the trees, causing much detention; still, we tugged onward, and found, as the Latin phrase hath it, "*Diligentia et perseverencia, vincunt omnia.*"

In ascending the river, we found the climate quite different, and much warmer, than on the coast. The days were hot, but the nights were cold and damp. The scenery is neither striking nor interesting, the land being generally low, and running back for many miles in extensive plains, over which range large herds of horses and cattle; and occasionally, elk and deer are discovered. There is a narrow strip of timber on each shore of the river, after ascending about 40 miles from the mouth; and from thence downward, nothing but tulie swamps are in sight. The musquitoes—which are innumerable—are of the largest kind, and of those possessing the longest and sharpest proboscis; and although they will *not* sting through boots or bend leather, they are most intolerably annoying. With the heat and muzquitoes by day, and the cool and damp nights, together with the want of sleep, which we could only attempt to woo until the schooner was moored, I cannot say that I was much delighted with my voyage—although it was up the far-famed "Sacramento, with my wash-bowl on my knee," that I was travelling.

Some of the passengers, by reason of the length of the voyage, had run short of provisions; and the cravings of hunger rendering them savage, they berated the captain, in all manner of terms and language, without stint or mercy; but, the eagerness of some to get to the diggings, was a little cooled by the horrible reports by downward boats and vessels which occasionally met us. These were, that the Indians were killing all the whites there, whom they could find in small parties: that five Oregonians had been cut off; and that it was dangerous for the miners to go from one digging to another. My friend, who had thus far "kept on with me, untired," (perhaps wisely thinking that the life that was within him was worth more than all the gold in California,) gave up the quest, and, stepping into a boat which came alongside of us, he returned to San Francisco.

In our toilsome passage onward, we passed several spots pointed out as the sites of cities with high-sounding names, but with not one building or a single citizen. At Montezuma, however, a beginning had been made, and one house was, and perhaps still is standing, "solitary and alone." New York of the Pacific—although it has gas enough to light its namesake of the Atlantic—does not as yet spread much, or threaten to rival the "Empire City of the Unio[illegible] But, who can foresee what *may* happen? California is a strange [illegible]ry, and, for prodigies, has no equal. We passed the town of Sutterville, (or, more properly, Sutter,) four miles below Sacramento City, which seemed a pretty spot of ground, ascending gradually from the river bank. A number of wooden and cloth houses and tents were erected there, and several vessels lying along the bank: some of them were stripped of their rigging, dismasted, and turned into dwelling-houses; and, altogether, things presented more promise of a town, than at any other place I had seen since leaving Benecia. I noticed a brick house at some distance from the river, which was said to belong to Captain Sutter. At length, after a week's passage, we reached the Embarkadero—so called, from its being the place of landing—in going to and from Sutter's Fort. This place is now christened and called Sacramento City.

The change of a name so appropriate, to that which has no significance, illustrates the idiotic passion of the Yankee, at home or abroad, to alter the nomenclature of places, as vanity or caprice may prompt him: and hundreds of places whose former designation commemorated some historical event, are changed to the name of one who has become possessed of the soil—with *city*, or *ville*, or *burgh*, tacked to the end of it; or else they choose a name in some foreign tongue which they do not understand, and murder propriety and common sense, in preposterous applications: thus we have Monte-reys in valleys, and Agua-nuevas, where there is no water—with thousands of similar incongruities.

It was my intention to stop a few days at the Embarkadero, in order to complete my arrangements, and to provide transportation to Sutter's Mill—the place where the first discovery of gold was made; and accordingly I pitched my tent in a convenient location, until these could be perfected. There were more and larger houses here than at Sutter; and lots on my arrival could have been bought very cheap, in proportion to what I found them after an absence of a few months—the rage for speculation, in the interim, having caused vast revolutions in the prices.

CHAPTER V.

Life at Sacramento—Oregonians—their costume and appearance—equestrian equipments and performances—sailors ashore—Jack on horseback—Sutter's Fort—a walk over—Jack in a gale—Mr. Marlinspike in a quandary—Jack afore it—broaches to—prices high—start for Sutter's Mill—Culloma—pleasant journey—flowery plains—camp near Rancho—game on the route—halt—dry diggin—Mormon Island—golden sands—Sutter's Mill—first discovery of gold—mill-race—locomotive mill—changed to a hotel—squatting—possession the best of titles—arrive at Culloma—search for pine timber—its consequences—news of the murder of the Oregonians confirmed—murdered man found—account of the massacre—Indian depredations—war declared—prisoners taken—their fate—Indians wild—mode of taming—Rancheros freesoilers—no slavery in California—extravagance of the Indians—extortion of the traders—Indians described—high price of necessaries—Culloma and its environs—enormous profits of the mill—high price of lumber—uses to which it was applied—miners come in—sailor's profusion—visit to the bar—machines described—process of washing—tin pan process—curtain raised—pass at the big bar—process of washing—music at the bar—quicksilver process.

While at Sacramento, I had an opportunity of seeing all sorts of people, from the wild Indian to the more wild-looking Oregonian, with hair untrimmed and "*unkempt*," their faces covered with abundant growth of beard, rough and razorable, and innocent of soap, if one might judge from appearances. Whatever may be the religion of these mountaineers, it can hardly be that of the Prophet of Mecca, for ablution of garb or person was no part of their exercises. These rude woodsmen, clad in buckskin garments, soiled and greasy, mounted on horseback upon saddles high before and behind, and equipped with spurs peculiar to California and Mexico, large and heavy, would dash through the place at full speed. In which equestrian performances they were imitated by the sailors, who had made successful voyages to the placers, and came back to *port* to spend their gains in carousals.

A sailor on horseback is entirely out of his element, and yet no person is more fond of riding than Jack. The first purchase he makes is a horse at two hundred dollars, other equipments, saddle, bridle, spurs, and rialto, will cost him seventy-five dollars more; and thus provided, however drunk he may be before, he is sure to freshen his nip at mounting, and then as soon as the anchor is a peak, off he starts under a press of sail. The old adage, "that sailors earn their money like horses and spend it like asses," is nowhere more fairly illustrated than in California; and when these carousals have emptied their pockets, and they have no longer a "shot in the locker," they make sail again for the diggings, in order to replenish their pockets.

Sutter's Fort is quite a large and roomy establishment, built of *adobas*, and occupied for stores, groceries, mechanics' shops, billiard rooms, &c. The walls are thick, making it warm in winter and cool in summer.

It is some two miles and a half from the Embarkadero, over a plain. I had not yet seen it; and feeling inclined to see the motley congregation about it, I took a walk over. I had scarcely made a mile, when I met a couple of jolly tars coming down the road full gallop; and a short distance further on, beyond a small gully, to my surprise I saw my nautical acquaintance of the Oregon, as he would himself have phrased it, "with his main topsail aback hove to;" that is, with the bridle pulled straight by the left hand, which clutched the pommel of the saddle; while with his right, he was hauling in the rein with all his might. The steed seemed astonished by this manœuvre, and with mouth wide open and neck half bent, he was staring at his rider, much in the manner as we may suppose of Balaam's ass expostulating with his rider.

A more ludicrous picture than Jack Marlinspike cannot be conceived; he was drunk as a piper; his lack-lustre eyes reeling in their sockets, and the outside of his nose, and parts of his cheek covered with snuff. Now nothing gives so comical a cast to the countenance of a drunken man as a dab or two of snuff; and if Jack had consulted stage effect in begrimming his visage, he could not have improved the queerness of his aspect.

As soon as within hail, I accosted him with the usual "halloo, Jack! whither bound?" Jack answered my salutation with a nod. "To the river," he replied; "but this b—— of a craft sets by the head, and don't steer well, and there is a narrow channel ahead. Besides, I've got the vessel in irons, and can't *stay* or *wear*; and there's a devil of a sea running, and blast me if I don't think I shall founder, before I can get her head round." All this while he was reeling in the saddle to and fro. "Well, Jack," said I, "slack up the right rein, and get the horse's head straight, and let him have his own way." "Aye, aye!" said Jack, "I think I'll try that tack by and by; but as I am making pretty good weather of it now, I'll *lie to* here till the sea falls, and then square away."

I passed onward, and had nearly reached the fort, when I heard a horse approaching at full speed. I looked back, and beheld Jack bouncing along at a furious rate, and as he passed me, I found that he had fast hold of the pommel of the saddle with one hand, and had clutched the crupper with the other. The horse as he came to the fort suddenly stopped, and away went Jack over his head, with a squelch to the ground. I hastened up, and by the time I arrived, some one had helped the fallen man to rise and gain a bench at the door.

"Not badly hurt I hope, Jack?" I said.

"No; all sound," he replied; "but, my eyes! such a tumble was enough to open some of my seams."

"But how came you here," I asked; "I thought you was going the other way."

"Well, so I meant to do," he answered; "but just after I saw you 'hull down,' I let go the starboard brace, and hauled in on 'tother, and lashed the helm a midship, and then I jammed both of these 'ere rib-ticklers," pointing to his enormous spurs, "hard home. But the wind must have chopped about, I'm thinking, for the ship swung clear round, and dashed a-head, pitching like the devil's bumboat in a cross sea; so I catches hold of the back stay, and thought all safe; but blast the rotten rigging! as soon as she brought up, all standing, it parted, and away I went, over the sprit-sail yard."

"But how do I find you here?" I asked.

"Why, my time was up in the Oregon," he answered, "and I thought I'd take a cruise to the mines; but when I came to square yards with the purser, I found I had special little rhino left. Hows'ever I made shift to get to the Fort, and there I fell in with Ben Bobstay and Harry Handspike,* just arrived, with plenty of dust, so I borrowed a handful; and we are bowsing our jibs about here, till the wind is fair for the diggings." The intention of Jack and his friends is easily explained. That is, to spree and carouse it until all the gold was gone, and then to go in quest of more. In that respect, the life of a sailor in California is the same as everywhere else.

The prices of everything at the Embarkadero were much higher than at San Francisco. Lumber was worth seven hundred dollars a thousand; horses, two hundred dollars, and mules three hundred dollars each; and then enormous prices continue to increase, as you approach the mines.

My destination was Sutter's Mill, now called Culloma, and I engaged an Oregonian, employed in the business of teaming, to take my effects there for twenty dollars each hundred pounds weight. As there were others going up, he soon got loading for two teams, of two or three yoke of oxen each—hauling about six thousand pounds; the freight consequently netted him twelve hundred dollars. The entire morning was occupied in weighing, and loading our goods upon the wagons; and being ready to start about noon, off we went, all of us on foot, as we could easily keep pace with the oxen, drawing heavy loads.

The road was dry and good. Passing the Fort, we entered upon the plain, which was covered with flowers of various descriptions, some fragrant, and all pleasant to the eye; and our journey promised to be agreeable and interesting, as the weather was dry and fine. At sun down having made about ten miles, we camped, and prepared supper, and in due time after this was disposed of, wrapped in our blankets, we stretched ourselves on the ground, where we slept comfortably until towards morning, when the weather became cold. Our encampment was near Leedsdolf's Rancho.

The following morning having breakfasted, as soon as the teams were ready, we resumed the road in good spirits, taking with us, by advice of the waggoner, a good supply of water, as that article was not to be found in the extensive plain which we were about to traverse. On the route, some straggling deer were seen, and now and then a kiota—an animal something resembling a red dog. As most of our party carried their rifles ready for service, many diverged from the road in the hope of killing something; but although the firing on all sides seemed like a "feu de joie," it was not discovered that any of the game had suffered, except from terror at the hubbub.

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* These are "noms de guerre." Most of the sailors at the mines are, according to the militia muster rolls, "absent without leave:" alias, *run*, or deserters; and therefore they undergo a new christening that they may not be traced.

The next day, towards evening, we halted at a small stream, where there was good feeding for cattle, and where a Yankee had put up a canvass house, prepared to entertain man and beast. The former with liquor and food, with the choice of the best spot which he could find out of doors to sleep upon; and the latter, to what they could pick up on the plain around. But we were independent of the landlord, as we carried edibles with us, with something to wash them down; and as the "feather beds" which we meant to occupy, were government property, our pockets were not much lightened for the entertainment.

But notwithstanding the little profit he made of us, the landlord gave us a great deal of good advice, and assuring us that there were very good dry diggings all about there, and that much gold had been got in the neighboring stream, he recommended that we should set to work forthwith. Some of us scratched about a while, and finding nothing, we came to the conclusion that the diggings were *too dry*, and bid the cunning landlord good bye. The ruse of this lone settler in the wilderness is pretty generally practised by others, in order to subserve the cupidity of the adviser; and in most cases, when counsel is given with extraordinary earnestness, it springs from interested motives.

After leaving our benevolent landlord, we passed to the left of "Mormon Island," a place of some celebrity, taking the nearest course to the Mill, and in the evening we stopped at a stream, ten miles only from the place of our destination. All along the road I had noticed that the sands were filled with minute shining particles, in color much resembling gold; and I was really verdant enough to suppose that at a pinch some "piles" might be gathered here; but leaving them "au pis aller," I thought it wise to secure the "big lumps" first. But I soon learned the truth of that excellent old saying, "all is not gold that glistens;" the brilliant sand that had deluded me being nothing but mica—or as it is there termed, "*fool's gold*."

As the march began in the morning, I concluded to push ahead in advance of the teams, in haste to reach Culloma, and to have before my eyes the spot where the great discovery was first made. A discovery which has produced an excitement scarcely equalled in the annals of history or fable; which has almost depopulated towns and villages on the eastern side of the mountain, to build up settlements, as if by magic, in California—and transformed a wilderness a few months before untrodden by the foot of man, into a thoroughfare for thousands. Sutter's Mill was this memorable spot; and although the rays of the sun were intolerably oppressive, and the road was becoming hilly and rugged, I stayed not my steps until an eminence was attained—a Pisgah to the gold hunter; and glancing down into the valley below, the long-sought *mill* was before me.

It was in constructing a tail race to this mill that the gold was first found. As soon as the water was let into the new excavation, particles of bright ore began to exhibit themselves. At first little notice was taken of them, few believing that they were of precious metal. But a Mr. Marshall, a man of some science and great sagacity, satisfied himself of the fact. But as he was interested with Captain Sutter in the mills about being constructed, he wisely concealed his knowledge until the buildings were completed—being well aware that if the workmen should find out the truth they would abandon all labor, except that of gathering the gold; and that consequently the mills would never be finished. The event justified his conclusions, for after gold could be had so easily, all other occupations were suspended.

Captain Sutter, at the same juncture, was constructing another mill some distance below, the race of which was four miles long, and being nearly circular, the excavation answered the double purpose of enclosing a large tract of land, as well as to supply the mill with water. This structure we crossed twice on our way upward. But when the population began to gather in, and tenements were indispensable, the buildings were taken down, and re-erected for store-houses at the fort. And as still fresh crowds poured onward the ambulatory building took a second flitting to the Embarkadero, where it figures in great dignity as the city hotel.

I found at Culloma several small frame buildings, log and cloth houses, and tents; three of which only had been built this season, the others having been erected soon after the discovery of the gold, and used as shops for the vending of commodities to the diggers at exorbitant prices. The land upon which the place stands belongs to the government, and since the race of *squatters* have been taken into especial favor by Congress, the process of obtaining title to any of the public domain has become the simplest thing imaginable. Possession, anywhere, is said to have "nine points in the law" on its side, and in California it over-rides the law itself. What need is there of warrants or patents, when the *taking* is all that is requisite? Prior possession is the law of the land, and excellent good law it is; for, as Blackstone hath it, "a rule of action prescribed by a superior," &c. &c., and shall not *action* without *rule*, backed by public opinion and *the strong arm*, *defend*, if it doth not *warrant*, quiet enjoyment.

Here again, I determined to pitch my tent, and make farther inquiry in order to govern my future proceedings, as well as to seek some initiation in the art and mystery of gold finding. Although every thing was frightfully dear, still, as prices were more extortionate farther onward, I deemed this the best place for my probationary sojourning. "Great events flow from little causes," says the proverb; and the grand *auriferous* discovery was made in consequence of the finding a tract of land covered with pine timber. Captain Sutter had long been in search of this necessary article, with the intent of erecting a saw-mill whenever he could find it, but had given up the quest in despair. A Mr. Wilmer, one of the earliest settlers of the country, informed the Captain that such a discovery was feasible, and undertook the quest, and having succeeded, Mr. Marshall, the partner of Sutter, was despatched with Wilmer into a region where no white man had ever before penetrated, to fix the site of the mill; and *thus* the great discovery was made.

At Culloma I ascertained that the news, communicated to us on the Sacramento, of the murder of the Oregonians by the Indians, and which had driven back my companion, unlike most bulletins, was not exaggerated. The massacre had been perpetrated; but, being well armed, and tolerably well *consorted*, I determined to face the danger. The diggings I was resolved to visit, and obstacles, interposed by man or beast, could be overcome by resolution. We had found a dead man on Weaver's Creek, on our journey to the mill, with marks of violence upon the skull, as if fractured by having been beaten with stones. But bows and arrows are the weapons of the Indians, and probably the sufferer met death at the hands of savages of a lighter complexion, although this murder was laid to their charge.

But the fact was undeniable, five Oregonians had been killed. It happened that six men of that clan were out "prospecting," (exploring,) on the Middle Fork, and when they had penetrated a deep cañon, (gulf,) a party of some forty Indians attacked them from the heights above. Unsuspicious of an ambuscade, the explorers had left their arms at some distance, and a flight of arrows among them was the first intimation of the proximity of their enemies. In their effort to reach the tent, in which their rifles were deposited, all but one were killed, and he had great difficulty in making his escape.

Many depredations upon the property of the diggers had before been perpetrated by the savages. Horses and cattle had been carried away, and much damage had been done by the marauders. It needed but this outrage to exasperate the miners to the highest pitch, especially the friends and countrymen of the sufferers. A war of extermination was therefore declared, and carried on by well armed and well mounted parties, determined on revenge. Eight Indians, with a number of squaws and pappooses, were captured and brought into Culloma. These clearly came within the jurisdiction of that respectable "bencher," Judge Lynch, and they were condemned to be shot. While one after another were thus being disposed of, some broke away, and took to the river, but soon the unerring marksmen despatched them with their rifles, and *not one escaped*.

The squaws and pappooses were liberated, but the bloody contest was still carried on; and after more than a hundred had been sacrificed to appease the manes of the slaughtered Oregonians, the Indians were driven into the snows of Sierra Nevada, the only place of refuge which could afford them safety from the hot pursuit which was kept up by their enemies.

This foray was carried on against what are called the *wild* Indians, in contradistinction to those who have been *subdued* to labor at the different rancheros. For the good behavior of the latter, the rancheros are responsible. No doubt all these respectable proprietors are *Wilmot proviso* men, and eschew slavery, but their mode of recruiting the number of their laborers is something more exceptionable, than if they obtained their supplies from the far-famed slave-market at Washington. The process is, to raise a posse and drive in as many of the untamed natives as are requisite, and compel them to assist in working the land. A pittance of food, boiled wheat or something of the kind, is fed to them in troughs, and this is the only compensation which is allowed for their services. Their condition is worse than that of the Peons of Yucatan, and other parts of Mexico, and yet there are no slaves in California!

It is true, in their wandering state they are a miserable race, for the most part going entirely naked, subsisting upon roots, acorns, and pine cones, and therefore their condition is improved by *servitude;* and the same thing may be said of the subjects of the king of Dahomy. Since the discovery of the gold, they have acquired some knowledge of its usefulness, but no clear conceptions of its value, and they part with their gatherings for whatever strikes their fancy, without much higgling in bargaining with dealers. In common with the whole human race, savage or civilized, they have great passion for decorating their persons, and some appear in calico shirts of the most gorgeous colors; the more red the better, with *two* coats on their back, and *three* pair of trowsers. Boots upon their feet, and a high crowned black hat, with a broad red ribbon around it, complete the equipment.

Some of higher ambition, would strut about in blue military coats sent down by the Hudson's Bay Company, fantastically ornamented with stripes of scarlet, for which they were content to pay enormous prices. These poor improvident devils were for a long time employed to gather for the rancheros, until they became wise enough to set up for themselves; and *then* so little did they understand the value of the dust, that they would part with it to the traders for whatever they fancied at the rate of weight for weight. An eye-witness of credibility told me, that he once saw an Indian purchase a quarter box of raisins, supposed with the box to weigh nearly eight pounds, and the dealer placed his commodity in one scale, and the Indian poured into the other a sufficient quantity of gold to balance it. Another taking a liking for a broken down horse, the intrinsic worth of which might have been twelve or fifteen dollars, gave a pint of gold dust and the promise of half as much more, for an animal that appeared to be useless to him. But it was undoubtedly purchased for food, as horse flesh is preferred to that of the ox, or even that of the mule.

These poor wretches are of medium stature, dark skin and hair, (which grows low down over their foreheads,) with ugly countenances, devoid of any intellectual expression, and are immeasurably inferior to the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains, and those of the Atlantic states. From much intercourse with the Jesuits, they have many of them, imbibed the Catholic religion, together with a smattering of bad Spanish, but with no *Catholic* virtues to enforce regard for the rights of *meum et tuum.*

In consequence of this outbreak with the natives, the trade with them, hitherto so profitable, was at an end, and many who had brought out lots of trinkets and rings of *simular* gold, in the hope of getting *bags* of the real stuff in exchange for it, found their merchandise unsaleable, and they were forced to go to the mines and dig for themselves, in order to replenish their exchequers. But if *gew gaws* had declined in price, provisions of all kinds had got up surprisingly. Pork was worth 10*s.*, fresh beef 3*s.*, flour 4*s.*, and pilot bread 6*s.* a pound respectively.

There is a table of land on each side of the river at Culloma. These are bounded on each side by high hills. The mill is situated on the south side, and the heights above it are covered with pine timber, from which, supplies for the mill were easily obtained. The mill was not running, as it was undergoing repairs, but its profits, when in operation, are enormous, as the lumber was constantly saleable at four hundred dollars the thousand feet, which was principally consumed in the erection of buildings, and not a little in the construction of rockers and other machines for the miners. Although it was yet April, the weather was hot in the day time, but the blasts from the snow-clad mountains would sink the mercury in the evening sometimes as low as 40°, and lower at day dawn; but the rising sun would very soon impart a genial warmth, very much to the comfort of us who lodged in tents.

The adventurers from the diggings were continually arriving with heavy bags of dust, and seemed to dispose of it as readily as if it was a burthen to them; or perhaps they set the less value upon it, because they could easily get more when their hoard was exhausted. None, however, were so reckless of consequences as the sailors, who seemed unhappy unless they could indulge in profuse expenditure. An individual of this class made shift to squander, among "troops of friends" who gathered about him, a purse of two thousand dollars, in four days; and though, while it was going, his companions were most affectionate, when the gold was all gone, his friends were gone also. But it was all the same to Jack; he could make sail for the mines for a fresh cargo.

It was not long after I had pitched my tent before I paid a visit to the bar below the mill, in order to ascertain what machines were used, and how to use them. The only machines available are the *cradles or rockers.* These are either of logs hollowed out, or of boards fashioned like a cradle, similar to those used before that necessary article of household furniture had *suffered* improvement. At the bottoms of these two or three cleets are nailed across, and at the foot a hole is made for the escape of the water. Some have no *foot-board*, but the other kind are preferable. A coarse screen of wire, or metal or dry hide, punched full of holes, distinct from the cradle, so that it can be attached to it and taken off at pleasure, is also necessary; and when thus placed on the cradle, which is slightly inclined footward, an apron is placed under it, standing in a different direction towards the head of the cradle; so that whatever passes upon it, is carried above the first cleet. The earth is put into the rocker, and sufficient water is kept pouring upon it, in order to separate the ore from the sand. For this purpose both hands must be employed, the cradle must be kept rocking, and the water must continue to pour. Thus the double operation is somewhat fatiguing, and much caution is necessary to prevent the gold from passing off with the sand. When washed, a tin pan is used to finish the process.

Some use tin pans only, which is quite a slow and laborious process. These fill the pan with earth, and place it under water, stirring the contents with their hands, in order to separate the gold; and when sufficiently stirred, the pan is brought to the surface, at the proper inclination, when it must be shaken, so as to discharge the sand, gravel, and stones. The pan must occasionally have pure water thrown in, to accelerate the process. Some do not care to wash out the black sand, but dry it with the gold, and afterwards separate it with a magnet. This process of the *pan* is very fatiguing, as it strains the limbs, and causes felons and other swellings upon the fingers.

And now, reader, I feel inclined to lift the curtain for a season, and anticipate a few weeks, in order to exhibit a congregation of diggers on the "bar." I, in common with many others, supposed that bottoms of the *Pactolian* streams were golden sand, and that the *bars* were of the same material, intermingled with *mud.* Many, under greater delusion than that which beset me, carried out dredging machines, in order to scoop up the dust by barrow loads. But the rivers are rapid, the bottoms rocky; and where soil is found, it is mixed with pebbles and coarse gravel. The bars are formed by slides from the mountains, and then earthy avalanches bring down large boulders, as well as the *debris* of the mountains, changing the course of the current, and forcing it to the other side of the river. The materials of which the deposit is composed imposes, therefore, much labor in the digging. But to my purpose.

We will suppose ourselves on the side of the ravine, above the bar, near enough to see and hear distinctly, and sufficiently elevated to enable us to take a view of the whole at a glance. Behold, then, each provident digger, after having selected a proper site for his rocker, and placed it in a proper position, and furnished himself with an adequate quantity of earth for his day's labor, commencing operations. A supply of earth is put into the rocker; the right hand is armed with a long-handled dipper, properly filled; the left is placed on the edge of the rocker, and the operator, in such an attitude as it suits him to assume, begins. Down pours the water from the dipper, and the machine is set in motion, both hands performing artistically and simultaneously the functions assigned them. The motion must be quick and steady; not so fast as to endanger the escape of the gold from the foot of the machine, nor so sluggish as to suffer the earth to compact itself. The process may not inaptly be compared to that so frequently seen in country households, when the good dame is rocking the cradle of a bawling brat, chaunting vociferously, "Rock a by," or "By, baby bunting," with the one hand, and with the other performing some culinary office; the principal difference being in the "lullabys" respectively enunciated. Here some Kentuckian in dulcet notes would troll you "*Old Dan Tucker*," or one of Jim Crow's melodies. Then a Cockney, carroling "*I vish I vas, and I know vhere.*" The Dutchman yonder, solacing himself with *St. Nic'laus, goed heilig man*," or, if that was not fast enough, "*Ik ben leiderlicht.*" Monsieur, alongside of him, roaring the "*Carmagnolle.*" The representatives of each nation splitting their throats, and uttering all sorts of sounds, from the gutterals of the Caernowan men to the soft labials of the Kanaka. And as for Neptune's *chargés*, they were not deficient in their cantatas, the most favorite of which was Fisher's hornpipe, sang to the words of "*Did you ever see the Devil*," &c. And now, having indulged our eyes, and tortured our ears, we will go back to Culloma.

There is another process of washing with quicksilver, which collects the gold only, while all else is discharged. The mercury is placed in the upper end of the machine, back of the first cleet; and, when the useless matter has passed off, instead of the finishing process with the pan, you have only to place the mass of gold and quicksilver in a bag of chamois leather, and squeeze the subtle fluid out through the pores of the bag, when it is ready for the mint. This process saves much gold which must inevitably be lost by the other mode—and will, in a short time, be universally adopted. Little of the quicksilver is expended in the operation, and it is again fit for immediate use.

CHAPTER VI.

Vested rights at the diggings—try the bar at Culloma—hard labor—preparation of the ground—tools, and how used—progress of Colloma—improvements and refinements—batting and bowling—constant stream of emigration—Doctors—no disagreement in charges—new diggings—further explanations—diseases of the miners—scurvy—preventive—start for the big bar—ferry, and mode of crossing—route described—onward progress—rioters—wolver panthers—grisly bears—dangerous to encounter—Californian mode—a Californian in peril—bear stories—encamp for the night—find a horse—fall in with Jack, of the Oregon—treed by a bear—Jack's story—encamp for the night—formal visit—a deputation of bears—fine timber country—gold blossom—beautiful stream and valley—Oregonians—the mountain reached—sublime prospect—poetic visions—their consequences—a friend lost—fruitless search—abandoned in despair—halt for the night—gloom of the party—sight of the bar—middle fork, and its mountains—difficult descent—horses unladen—drag constructed—rope parts, and cargo rolls down the mountain.

In no part of the world are the rights of property more religiously respected than at the placers. If a man chose to suspend his labors for an indefinite time, and left his tools in the diggings, they were held sacred from invasion; but, if there were no evidences of *possession* left behind, any one might enter in, and the former owner was estopped, by the abandonment, from ousting the new possessor.

Although the old miners had abandoned the bar near Colloma—pronouncing it but "a poor diggin',"—I resolved to make my *coup d'essai* there. Many of my fellow-passengers of the Oregon came to the same conclusion; and it was soon peopled by a colony of "Johnny Raws," busily intent upon their labors. The water was too high; and the nightly floods produced by the melting of the snow on the mountain tops during the day, occasioned us much inconvenience. These, however, would subside in the afternoon; but we met the same obstacles the next morning; and we found the excavations we had made, filled with water, which had to be baled out, or the hole abandoned.

Green as were the diggers, many averaged an ounce a day. This yield, for a season, satisfied me; and I went to work with a will—gaining much gold as well as experience, which was afterward found available. Let no one imagine that gold-digging and washing are boys' plays. On the contrary, it is the hardest kind of work. In most cases the digging is amongst rocks, stones, and gravel, difficult to remove. The surface often promises little—but, by perseverance and the free use of the pick-axe, richer earth is disclosed. After a location is selected, the first thing is, to clear the ground of rocks and other incumbrances, and then to test the richness of the soil by experiment; and thus continue until you reach the rock at the bottom, where the richest deposits are found. This rock is of slate or rotten granite, and holds in its crevices rich lumps and grains; some of the lumps are so large as to be extracted without washing—the finer particles alone requiring that operation. A spoon and sheath-knife are serviceable in clearing the metal from these fissures. The excavations are from two feet to fifteen; and these are liable to be filled by the rising of the water, and, if deep, to require constant baling. In such cases, one, or even two persons, cannot work to advantage; but, where there are no rocks to be removed, and the ground is shallow, one person can get along very well.

The tools used in ordinary, are pointed shovels, long and short handled, pick-axes, light crow-bars, and hoes; with these, the tin-pan and ladle are indispensable. Many proceed on their quest "prospecting," as it is termed, and with nothing but a pan, sheath-knife, and long-handled spoon, fit in that respect to sup "*parritch*" with "auld clootie;" they clamber through the ravines and over rocks, clearing the crevices in the manner above stated. The first of these adventurers were very successful, but they were imitated by great numbers of others, who soon cleared away the gold, and now but little is found in that way.

Many may imagine that the manual exercise of the tin-pan in gold washing would not be very laborious, but it is far otherwise. The labor of carrying frequent loads of earth to some distance, is not a little fatiguing. Particularly when exposed in the valleys to the powerful rays of the sun; and the strain upon the shoulders, hips, and knees, is exceedingly painful. I tried it at first, but soon determined to pay three ounces for a rocker, and found it a cheap bargain.

To some of my readers this description of tools, and the mode of using them, may appear prosy, but I design my book for the *utile*. If, perchance, the *agreeable* should mingle with it, the greater my gratification. If I had had in the outset the information which I am so willing to dispense to others gratis, my gains in California would have been greater, and my trials less severe. And if any future adventurer, enlightened by my labors, should get rich at the placers, he may consider himself my debtor for twenty ounces at least from the profit which may accrue to him.

Colloma began to assume the appearance of a town. Several families from Oregon were there. Individuals of the softer sex were rare, and the specimens exhibited were not very alluring; still civilization seemed advancing. We had preaching in the open air every Sunday, to which, sitting in my tent, I could listen, and I hope with proper edification. Other symptoms of *progress*, less beneficial, began to appear. Gambling-houses were numerous, and ball-alleys, and bowling-saloons erected, even when the small supply of lumber in the place was wanted for better purposes; and these did not fail to be crowded with votaries, preferring to make their "*ten strikes*" there than to delve in the placers.

New comers were constantly arriving, some having crossed the country through Mexico, and some by the isthmus, and others from the Lord knows where. Many set about making provision for going onward—a large proportion to the "Middle Fork." Some, however, were *brought* *to*, for the want of means to proceed, and accordingly they set about obtaining them by their industry.

Not a few also, like myself, were willing by working here to qualify themselves for richer digging elsewhere, and at the same time gather information where those diggings could be found. Prices, although enormous here, were less extravagant than farther onward. The sons of Esculapius, however, determined to outstrip all other craftsmen in high charges. M. D.'s, by patent, born-bonesetters, and quacks of all kinds abounded, and all were on a par, charging from one to four ounces a visit, and who graduated their prices for curing a broken head or a sore finger, by the quantity of *dust* in the possession of the patient—sweeping him clean, whether the value was *fifty* or *five hundred* dollars.

Besides the "South Fork," there are various other diggings within ten miles of Colloma. At Weaver's Creek much has been obtained, and the quest is still productive. The old "Dry Diggings," and others known as Kelsey's, between Weaver's Creek and the South Fork, seven miles northeast of Culloma, are yet frequented. These are in ravines, (sometimes called "gulches,") in the mountains, where there is but little water, except in the rainy season, and which in midsummer are quite dry. These diggings are successfully worked in the winter, and have yielded large profits. During the past season the country, even to the Snowy Mountains, has been ransacked, and many ravines have been found in which good *raises* have been made, but which are now supposed nearly exhausted.

The lookers *out*, and the lookers *on*, are wide awake to cut in to the new discoveries; and those on exploring expeditions are narrowly watched, and are often traced to their haunts, before the treasure has all been gathered. None can monopolize a rich digging for any length of time, as they are obliged to come in for provisions, and then they are followed, and their discoveries become known.

While thus employed at Colloma, I made occasional excursions to the various diggings in the vicinity, and explored those on the South Fork with great industry. It will never do to trust to the report of such as you find occasionally engaged at the different placers. Your true miner is like the covetous gentleman of Esop; and whenever he is unable to collect all the treasures about him for himself, is rarely willing to encourage others to participate in it. Therefore, when such a one is encountered, although he may be bagging three or four ounces a day, he will respond to the usual question, "what success?" none at all; mighty poor diggings; sha'nt stay here long, &c. But come back again a fortnight afterwards, and you will find him still delving, unless perchance he has gathered his "pile," and gone to the settlements.

In the course of my rambles on this occasion, I fell in with many of the operators afflicted with swellings on the thumbs and fingers, and with sores occasioned by bruises or excoriations. Their proneness to these, the sufferers ascribed to some properties of the soil or water into which they are so often obliged to immerse their limbs. But the cause can be more properly ascribed to their continued diet upon salt provisions without vegetables, which deteriorates the juices. The same cause produces the *scurvy* among them, which, if not arrested in time by proper applications, proves fatal. A good preventive is a decoction of the leaves of the fir tree, and this sweetened is not unpalatable; a bottle of this, therefore, is an excellent addition to the *medicine chest* of a digger at the placers.

My reconnoisances were completed, and a friend being about to establish a store on the big bar of the celebrated "Middle Fork," I resolved to accompany him on his tour of observation. This place was selected for that purpose, upon the representations of some Oregonians, in regard to its dimensions and productiveness; as to it would naturally throng the various adventurers on their way to the mines by every practicable route, from that by Cape Horn to the passes over the mountain.

My blankets and provisions were therefore packed upon one of the horses, and replenishing my haversack with such *prog* as would be consumed on the way, it was duly shouldered, and well armed with rifle in hand, tin cup attached to my belt, I was ready for the march. Others were disposed to accompany us, so that when mustered, we numbered five men, armed to the teeth; a sufficient force we hoped to secure us from the attack of Indians and wild beasts which were equally the objects of apprehension.

Our cavalry did not increase our military strength; one horse being loaded with all he could stagger under, and the other carrying burthen, but not so much as to prevent him from being occasionally mounted, and every thing in readiness, we proceeded to the ferry. Here a solitary Charon had constructed a small scow, and stretched a rope across the river, by which it was hauled from one shore to the other. This craft was so small that it could only carry four persons at a time, the ferrying of which was two dollars each, and the transportation of the baggage at a price pro rata. Here it was necessary to strip the horses, and swim them across, which, as the current was rapid, was attended with fatigue, and occasioned detention. Three of us, therefore, the first over, proceeded up a lofty mountain before us. It was ten o'clock, A. M., and the rays of the sun, almost overpowering, compelling us often to halt for breath, and back up against a tree for support. Two hours hard struggling brought us to a valley at the summit, where a store had been established; and here we *came to*, in order to wait for *convoy*. Our companions soon arrived, and turning the horses out to graze, we refreshed ourselves the best we might, washing down our food with pure water from an adjacent spring.

Before leaving Culloma, an Oregonian had described the route advisable to pursue, and his direction being about as clear as that of Tony Lumpkin in the play, I found great difficulty in comprehending him. But by much questioning and taking notes of his answers, we obtained the following programme of the course: "On leaving the

'Fords bar road,' at a blazed tree, take a square turn to the right, and follow a blind trail, keeping on the ridge dividing the cañons and small streams running into the 'South', from those flowing to the 'Middle Fork,' until a high mountain at the head of an immense cañon; then turn to the left, still keeping on the '*divide*' (ridge) for some miles, and then to the right; and if we did not lose our way we would find the '*big bar.*'"

The reader who is familiar with the best drama of Goldsmith will perceive that my comparison is not inapt; and in addition, this *blind trail*, from being abandoned for another route by the "Spanish bar," and thence by the other side of the river after crossing at that place, had become very, very blind, so that we were obliged to hunt it out with great caution.

Our refreshment over, we proceeded on our journey. It was on the 14th May, and vegetation had put forth all its attractions; the mountain air was cool and invigorating, and the beautiful valleys through which we passed were clothed with all the beauties of the vernal season. The trees were lofty, and more luxuriant than any which we had hitherto met with; and altogether, our wayfaring was delightful. We beguiled old time on the way by such amusing topics as occurred, and each furnished his share of anecdote, to enliven the conversation; and "all went merry as a marriage bell." If perchance thought of loved ones at home should steal into the mind, they were cherished in silence, until the sadness they created had departed.

Grizzly bears, wolves, and panthers abounded in that region; and the probability of meeting these, or of falling in with a party of marauding Indians, might also intrude; but as we were well armed, we dismissed them at once. There is another animal called the kiota, between the dog and the fox, but partaking more of the roguery of Monsieur Renard, than of the honesty of the other canine race. They are sly thieves, and lose no opportunity to plunder the provisions of the emigrants, who for that reason make war upon them; some for past depredations, and some for fear of future abstractions from their knapsacks; but, aware of their indiscretions, and fearing the consequences, the kiotas keep at so safe a distance, that few are killed.

The howling of wolves and the screaming of panthers are familiar to many of the back settlers of the Atlantic States; but the growl of a grizzly bear is not so familiar. This animal, larger than those common with us, and even exceeding in size the white bear of the Polar regions, is powerful, and when provoked is extremely dangerous: some are so heavy as to weigh eight hundred or a thousand pounds. Their food in general is the small game which they happen to fall in with, and acorns, nuts, and such roots as afford nutriment. They rarely attack man, unless driven to desperation by famine or hostilities against them, and never refuse to enter the ring without seconds or bottle-holders, whenever they are assaulted. A single customer, however rough a one, or however expert or undaunted, stands little chance; for if reached by a ball, unless it pierces the heart, Bruin becomes the assailant; and a blow from his paws, or an embrace too *affectionate*, soon finishes the contest. It is unsafe even for parties to attack them, unless their rifles are of large calibre; for no animal on earth dies harder than a grizzly bear.

The Californians sometimes, whenever they come across one of them in a favorable spot, when their expertness in the management of their horses can avail them, attack it with the *lasso*, and throw it with such precision as to catch the quarry by the neck or leg; and then, by wheeling round a tree, they bring Bruin to a stand still, when various modes are adopted to despatch him. But this is attended with much danger. One of these, a short time before, failed in his attempt to secure his prize; the bear having caught the rope, without noosing himself; and then the horseman himself was brought up. The lasso, being fastened to the saddle, could not be detached; and the bear, tugging at the rope, soon convinced his enemy of the prudence of dismounting, and of sacrificing the life of his horse, in order to save his own.

Of course, those who were most afraid of such visitations, were most fond of descanting *thereanent*, and divers accounts were given of bloody battles with bears. But still we jogged on, until the subject was worn threadbare and forgotten. We encamped for the night, when we enjoyed our slumbers uninterrupted until dawn, and then proceeded forward. We had scarcely gone a mile, when we encountered a horse, saddled and bridled, grazing in the woods, with the halter or larret trailing about him. Aware that he must have strayed from some pilgrim ahead of us, he was caught and conducted along. At the distance of a couple of miles farther, one of the company discharged his rifle at a kiota, when, from a short distance ahead, came the report of a revolver, as if in answer to the signal; and very soon afterwards, a man appeared coming down to us, who, upon his near approach, I recognised as my nautical friend Jack Marlinspike, of the Oregon.

As soon as he came near enough, I accosted him with the usual inquiry, and found that he was in quest of the estray which we had brought along, and which was restored to him. "How did he get away from you, Jack?" asked I.

"Well, you see, sir," said Jack; "but I'm bloody dry, and I have staved my liquor bottle," holding the shattered flask to view.

All came to a halt; and handing Jack my usual allowance of brandy, I bade him toss it off. "Thank'ee kindly," said he; and taking a huge pinch of snuff and turning his quid, he proceeded:

"Well, you see, sir, I am bound for the 'big bar;' and being tired of waiting for convoy, I got the shape of the coast, with its bearings and distances, and set sail alone. Well, I was making good weather of it, and came to for the night in a tolerable good roadstead, about a league ahead. Sun was just down, and I was towing my horse along to a good place to let him adrift until morning, when I heard a thundering growl. Off starts the horse with a jerk, slips the painter, and crowded all sail.

"Well, I did not keep him in sight long, before another growl, close aboard of me, made me look about—and, my eyes! there was a chap in a gray grego, about five fathoms off! I faced about—and he *came-to*, lifting himself upon his hind legs, as if to take a better observation, and shuffling forward, as if he wanted to scrape acquaintance. 'Thank'ee,' says I, to myself, 'I'd a little rather not!' and I backed sharp up to a pine-tree about as big as the mizzen-mast of a whaler—and up the ratlins I went, in no time.

"I had got about half-mast high, when on he comes, growling and scratching, and looking up at me; but when he tried to follow, it was no go—and he gave up the job. Well, I soon got up into the *cross-trees*, and looked down upon him. Thinks I, 'My cove, you're choused out of me! Maybe you'll make sail for a supper elsewhere!' But, devil a bit! There he was, walking backward and forward, like a jolly tar on duty, all night long; but, just about sunrise, he looked up to me with a grin and a growl, just as if he was saying, '—— your eyes, Jack! you've got to windward of me this time, any how!' and off he started; and when I thought he had made a pretty good offing, I came below: and now, messmates," he added, "if you'll let me join company, I shall be much obliged to you." All were glad of the accession, and on we jogged together.

Arriving at the spot designated as the turning off place from the "Fords' bar road," we struck the big bar trail, and travelled onward until we came to grass and water, when we stopped for the night. The days were hot at this season, but the proximity of the Sierra Nevada made the air, as the sun declined, cold and uncomfortable; we therefore, after pitching our tent, provided an adequate quantity of fuel to last the night, and built a rousing fire. I employed the remaining daylight in examining the ground about the encampment. Fragments of quartz rock, indicating the existence of gold, were scattered about; and I proceeded to make some efforts to discover it with my sheath-knife, but was unsuccessful.

Our supper—consisting of no great variety—was soon despatched; and each man, with his arms beside him, stretched himself out upon his blankets. We had replenished our fire with wood, as well to impart comfort within the tent, as to afford us light to distinguish objects without; and, giving care to the winds, each set himself to woo "nature's restorer." One by one, gave evidence of success in the nasal *melody* which was elicited, and all seemed more fortunate than myself; but at length, notwithstanding the various sounds from so many discordant probosces, I fell into a short slumber. Soon, however, a crackling of branches and rustling of leaves awoke me; and, raising the bottom of the tent, and casting my eyes outward, I discovered—no welcome sight!—an enormous grizzly bear!

Enormous he appeared to me—and, I firmly believe, he was really so; but, had he been even diminutive, the time, place, and circumstances, would doubtless have enlarged his dimensions. I gently awaked my companions, and informed them of my discovery; and each man seized his most available weapons. Some, with natural curiosity, passed out of the front of the tent, and saw two others, as if blockading us in our encampment. We came to the conclusion, therefore, that Mr. Marlinspike's friend of the preceding night had sued out a writ of replevin against him, and brought two sheriff's officers to serve it!

A council of war was held, and we came to the conclusion to *resist process;* but, as the better part of valor is discretion, we resolved to await the *forcible entry* of the sheriff's *posse*, before rendering our reasons for resistance—each man mentally making to his adversaries without, that pacific proposition which had, in his school-boy days, often stood him in good stead,—"You let *me* alone, and I'll let *you* alone." Still, every eye was on the alert; and each, with finger upon the trigger of his fire-arms, was prepared to do his devoir at the onset. After prowling about for some time, snuffing the air, as if to find what our tent was made of, and what were its contents, they trotted off; and, after a vigilant watch of considerable duration, finding no symptoms of their return, we again composed ourselves to rest. This might, perhaps, have been a visit of ceremony, conformable to *bearish* custom; but, I am no great observer of etiquette, and therefore I took no future opportunity, during my stay in the country, to return the call of the Bruin family, however distinguished they may have been among the "upper ten" of Ursa Majordum.

The rising sun found us again in motion; and, passing over rolling lands, (some rolled up almost to the skies,) covered with majestic trees of every description—stately pines, towering cedars, tall and beautifully tapering fir-trees, with now and then a gigantic oak, profusely scattered about. "What a glorious place for saw-mills!" said some. But, *cui bono?* where was the market for lumber? This could be manufactured in Canada or Maine, and sent round Cape Horn to San Francisco, Stockton, or even Sacramento, cheaper than it could be transported from the mountains to any settlements.

The gold blossom (broken quartz) was scattered on the ground over which we passed during the day; but no time was afforded for experimenting; and we kept onward until noon, when, descending into a deep ravine, in order to procure water, and the necessary refreshment for our cattle, we partook of our *nooning*—washing down "cold junk" and "hard tack" with water from the bright stream, which perhaps rivalled Pactolus itself in richness. The tall trees above us, shut out the rays of the sun; and, seated on the grassy bank, we eyed the beautiful stream as it bounded onward over its bed of shining pebbles—enjoying the splendid landscape around us. It seemed as if the senses could never weary in the charming spot; even *we* seemed for a moment spellbound; but, if it had been the far-famed grotto of Calypso, and her goddess-ship had wooed us all and singular to stay, we could not have been restrained in our progress to the "big bar."

The high mountain spoken of by our Oregonian friend, who had given us directions for our journey, was in full view; and just as we had reached its base, three of the *fifty four forty* men who had been to the bar with seven or eight horse loads of provisions for the miners, and with other necessaries, including supplies of sugar, brandy, beer, raisins, and *playing cards*, made their appearance. Of these we enquired our way to the bar, and found that our expectation of reaching it that night would be disappointed. They assured us that it was fifteen miles distant; and that expert woodsmen as they were, they had been several times lost, in consequence of the blindness of the trail. This was cold comfort to us, who were novices. The Oregonians, however, gave us the best directions in their power, with hearty wishes of good luck, and we parted. The summit of the mountain, after a toilsome march, was at length attained. Here a halt was necessary, for we were all nearly exhausted; and while resting our limbs and gathering breath, we had a most sublime view of the extensive country below and around us. Vision was unbounded, except by the blue horizon: and as we cast our eyes westward, many imagined that they could behold the Pacific. This could hardly have been possible, as the distance was at least one hundred and fifty miles.

All were enraptured by the magnificence of the scene; but one of the company, whose invocation of the tuneful sisters had often been successful, feeling a fit of inspiration strong upon him, took out his tablet, in order to record the poetic strain with which his imagination was teeming; and when the others had sufficiently rested themselves, and were prepared to move onward, the moon-struck poetaster bade us go onward, and leave him to his meditations—promising to overtake us in a short time. We took him at his word, and moved on. Arrived at a "burnt tree," the last plain landmark, from whence we were to diverge to the left, we halted to make discoveries of the onward trail. This was so indistinct, that it was traced with the utmost difficulty; and when we pursued our course, the track was so blind that it was several times entirely lost. It was then necessary for all hands to be on the alert, to endeavor to discover in some bare spot the hoof marks of the Oregonians: and we wandered over much ground before any such traces were discovered, until near night-fall, when we found a beautiful spring, and satisfactory evidences of the trail.

Our friend had not yet joined us, and becoming anxious for his arrival, while the tent was preparing some of us went back, firing our guns as signals; but listening for reply, the echoes of our salvos were all that we could hear. We now became extremely alarmed for his safety. He had, it is true, provisions for the night, and therefore would not suffer from hunger; but his blankets were with us, and without them, the extreme cold towards morning would be scarcely endurable. And these dangers aside, the hazards of encountering wild beasts were formidable. Altogether, we considered our poor friend in a critical condition, and we abandoned the hope of ever again beholding him.

The loss of our companion cast a gloom upon our spirits, and throughout the night he was ever in my mind, sleeping or waking. Sometimes a joyful dream would present him before me safe and sound, and then another more sombre would depict him mangled and torn by wild beasts; the night was comfortless, and I was truly glad when the dawn arrived. The cold had been unusually severe: a melancholy presage of the suffering which our lost companion must have endured; and our breakfast was as dolorous as our refection of the night before. But onward was the word—and with heavy hearts we proceeded. We were now about four miles from the bar, but the trail was so indistinct that we were obliged to go onward with the greatest caution. By slow degrees, however, we gained the summit of the land, and after many reconnoisances for the most easy descent, we chose that which seemed most practicable, and wended our way. We came to a narrow rim or table of level land, and then to a precipitous declivity, which led us to another level, and after several similar had been passed, we came to a pinnacle of rock, from whence we could discern the "Middle Fork." A wide stream—but to our eyes so great was the altitude, that it seemed a silver thread between the dark green mountains.

We continued to descend the steep and dangerous passes, until we had a clearer view of the valley; and reaching a promontory, where the vision was unobstructed, the broad and majestic river lay unrolled before us. We now cast a glance upward to the mountains upon the other side, which seemed twin brothers to the Andes, and even more lofty and precipitous than the one we had descended; and running our eyes from its cloud-capped summit to its base, the aspect presented an unfavorable prospect of the descent before us. Indeed, in the mirror below, in which its rugged sides were reflected, it seemed that the descent was almost perpendicular and impracticable.

Still, however, we continued step by step to descend, holding the long "larrets" of our horses, and leading them onward in zig-zag courses, being especially careful of the security of our own footing over the slippery pine leaves, and more particularly anxious about theirs, lest heavily laden as they were, an unfortunate stumble might precipitate them and us into the abyss below. Had such an event occurred, we should have found too *facile* a descent into the *avenues* which seemed yawning to receive us, for nothing but a large and fast-rooted tree could have brought up either; and perhaps even then the breath might be knocked out of us.

Onward, however, we trod the dangerous track, leading our snail-paced steeds along, taking good care to adjust their packs from time to time, for fear the inequality of the burthen might occasion them to lose their balance: at length we came where all farther progress seemed impossible, without unlading our beasts, and a deliberate view of the pass admonished us of the prudence of that measure. The descent in any way seemed a Herculean task, and we might have come to the conclusion that it was impossible, had not several minute animals in human form been discovered moving about the bar. They put me in mind of Gulliver's Lilliputians, thus diminished to the eye, but as I had heard of none of *that* race having reached the diggings, though all others under the sun were there represented, I came to the conclusion that the bipeds below us were veritable men, imperfectly visible from the high position which we occupied.

Our steeds were now disencumbered of their packs, and we set forward to take a look before us, and found a most discouraging prospect. We concluded therefore, to despatch one of our number down to the bar, in order to ascertain if there was not a better place to descend. Accordingly, letting himself down the steep in the best manner he could, he went upon his voyage of discovery. Our *dove* proved a *buzzard*, and after waiting a weary while without any report from the tardy messenger, patience was exhausted, and we determined to devise some way of getting to the bottom.

With the aid of an axe we felled a small fir, and cutting off a small portion of the butt in order to reduce it to the proper length, leaving snags of limbs on the side which was to be undermost to arrest a too rapid descent, the lading was stowed away in the top. A rope was now fastened to the lower end, by which it was to be drawn downward if necessary, and another, by way of *guy* as Jack called it, at his suggestion, was made fast astern. A "tall fellow" had charge of the bow rope, and Jack undertook the charge of the stern fast; all went well for a season, but a sudden pitch was attained, and off started the drag by the run. The man forward got out of the way with difficulty, and Jack seeing that the craft was getting too much headway, sprang forward, and took a turn about the body of a small tree; but the velocity was too great—the fast parted—the drag slewed round, and capsized in an instant, and away went the cargo.

Here was a scene!—bales bounding—bags rolling—boxes sliding—and occasionally opening and distributing their contents around—pieces of salt *junk* escaped from the package skipping from point to point—while *junk bottles* released from captivity, like all things suddenly emancipated, were cutting capricious capers as the power of gravitation impelled them forwards; but soon the chaos became invisible, and with fear and trembling we began to follow our household goods, in much tribulation, anticipating the utter perdition to which they seemed hastening.

We got down, heaven knows how; the horses sliding upon their haunches, and some of us *par force* performing the same gambols that our traps had done some minutes before; but a few excoriations excepted, we got to the bottom in safety. Here we pitched our tent, and set about gathering within it our scattered property. The damage was not as great as had been apprehended; the unbreakables had suffered no deterioration; and a solitary bottle, containing brandy, was the only thing worse for wear. This had lost a *little* blood through a crack which it had received in the concussion, and was doomed to a more copious phlebotomy. For after having secured our goods, we made due *libations* or *bibations*, for our fortunate escape, and with a good dinner of fried bacon, with the best condiments the place afforded before us, we cracked many a joke upon our rapid descent to the big bar, in which our laggard of a messenger came in for a full share. He, it seems, was looking upward on the drag turned over, and taking the snags for the legs of a horse, thought that we were sliding down the animals upon their backs; and great was his wonderment thereat.

CHAPTER VII.

Arrival at the Big Bar—prospects—Oregonians described—not communicative—Indians—Flat-heads and natives—explore the bar—ruse of the miners—visit other bars—Volcan's Bar—certain indications of gold—congregation at the bar—state of society—rights of property—efficiency of the "Code Lynch"—hours of labor—culinary implements—and processes—Oregonian women—combinations to drain and work the bar—successful—great field for joint stock companies—Jack at the rocker—more sailors arrived—carousal—Jack's nautical version of his adventure in the tree-top.

We had gained the "Big Bar," and were now in a state of security from wild beasts, quadruped and biped. The horses were cast loose to shift for themselves, without apprehensions that they would get astray, being enclosed by a wall two miles high. And while I was getting my things in order for the next day's operations, my friend went out among the diggers, to make inquiry as to the probable success of his commercial adventure. He returned in high spirits, having, by peeping into the washers of the miners, discovered large lumps and heaps of the glittering metal, which gave assurance of the richness of the deposits.

The diggers are not very communicative, particularly the Oregonians, who seem to have imbibed the notion that the first crossers of the Rocky Mountains have prescriptive rights; and they are, therefore, jealous of new-comers, and anxious to keep them aloof—always giving the most discouraging answers to inquiries, although they may be scooping up the gold by handfuls. Away from the diggings they are civil enough, but when there, like Falstaff, they "imitate the noble Roman in brevity," and give *crusty* answers to soft questions.

They are a hardy race, accustomed to all privations, prepared for any emergency to which their roaming life may expose them, and ready to encounter all kinds of animals which may choose to offer them battle, holding the grizzly bear and the native Indian in the same esteem, and in the same category as it regards humanity—and had the Indian the more valuable skin, they would hunt him with more zest than either the buffaloes or the bears. Some of these hardy *northmen* bring with them a tame Indian from Oregon to assist in their labors. There are various races to be found among them, from the native to the *Flat-head*, whose high compressed foreheads resemble the portraits of the ancient Guatemalans, as described by Stephens, and are a very singular people. They all speak what is termed, and in truth is, a "jargon," composed of various dialects, which is familiar to the native Indians and to the Oregonians.

I spent the rest of the day, after arranging my affairs, in making inquiries about the bar, questioning those who were conversible, and peeping into the rockers and pans of the surly and unsociable. My experience enabled me to judge by the eye with some degree of accuracy, the profits of their labor, and I found the yield truly astonishing. Some would have several ounces of pure bright lumps, the product of half a day's work; and there were none who were not doing, in the mercantile phrase, "a fair business."

I found here some who had come up in the first trip of the California, who had been several weeks at work. Two of these who were in partnership, to my inquiry, "What luck!" answered, "A poor day—very; that is all we have as yet," they said, pointing to a tin-cup, in which I saw about six ounces of very pure metal. "Why, my friends!" I exclaimed, "I am surprised that you don't look out for better diggings!" "Well," said one of them, with a knowing look, "there is not much to be got by wandering about;" and in fact their resolution was commendable.

The following day I was occupied in visiting other minor bars in the vicinity; and clambering over the rocks, in ascending the river, I arrived at what is called the "Volcano Bar," at the foot of a mountain, which from every indication, has, at a remote period, been an active volcano. The prodigious quantity of huge rock, bearing marks of former ignition, with boulders, and sand, ejected from its bowels, with the intermixture of lava, prove the action of subterranean fires, long since extinguished. Perhaps they had ceased to belch forth their flaming contents long before the rivers had found a passage through the primeval *debris*, and washed the precious metals, with which it was intermixed, down to the shallows below. No marks of the existence of the flames with which they once glowed have been discovered, either by extraordinary heat upon the surface or the appearance of smoke through crannies and fissures, and in all probability they are extinct forever.

The mountains on both sides of the river are high and precipitous, exposing in their craggy sides the quartz rock and slate of which they are composed. These formations alway indicate the presence of gold; and the earth also was of that kind in which auriferous metals most abound, and beneath and among the alluvial of the river, as well as the bed of the stream, the precious metal exists in great abundance.

The congregation upon the big bar was a motley mixture, and presented a curious spectacle to the eye of a novice. Whatever their origin, or whatever had been their national habits and costume, all were resolved into the class "digger;" and in garb and personal appearance, the nation of the big bar bore the national aspect. As is the case everywhere, some were provided with more means of comfort than their neighbors, and luxuriated in tents; others would frame a "*bield*," of bushes, to protect them from the sun and storm; and others, less provident, would content themselves with the sheltering branches of the trees which grew at the foot of the mountain. Blankets, however, were to all absolutely necessary, as the nights were sufficiently cool to require them. Some had horses or mules upon which to transport their luggage from place to place; but, for the most part, the *ten-toed machine*, in use in all parts of the world where no better mode of locomotion can be found, was most in vogue among the miners.

The *equestrian* part of the population, though they boasted more comforts, did not arrogate to themselves any superiority on that account; and the state of society, although not fastidiously select, was certainly a pattern of the purest democracy; while the laws—not those of Solon or of Lycurgus, but of the "code Lynch," afforded as ample protection to person and property as those administered in the purest days of Sparta. As has been before stated, possession, once obtained, was quietly enjoyed, and none presumed to invade the digging, or to use the tools of its occupant, or to remove property which was left in it as evidence of prior right. None entered without leave the dwelling of another, although the tenement might be vacant for the time, and without locks or bars: these, with the stores and accumulations of their proprietors, were safe from molestation, although they might be several days absent. The strong and the weak were upon a footing of equality; and it seemed that with the discovery of the *gold region*, the *golden age* had returned with it. If this order and quietude was at all interrupted, it was upon the arrival of some new comer, to whom the "lex diggerorum" was not yet familiar, but into the knowledge of which he was speedily inducted.

The hours of labor in the summer are from six to eleven, A.M., and from two to six in the afternoon. In travelling from one digging to another, the equestrium gives his horse the benefit of his blankets, by placing them between the back and the saddle; and although by this process they imbibe that odor so offensive to the nostrils of Trinculo of the Tempest, and from being never cleansed, they retain it, until expelled by a stronger effluvium, I never heard any complaints upon the subject.

The culinary apparatus of the digger is of few utensils; of which a camp kettle, frying pan, and tin cup, each indispensably necessary, sometimes make up the tale; a sheath knife, whether in wayfaring or at board or bed, is always forthcoming. Tea and coffee is much used; but the process of making it is something different from that practised by persons less experienced. The material, whether of the one or of the other, is placed in the camp kettle, and *quant. suf.* of cold water is poured in and subjected to the boiling process a reasonable time, and then it is considered "fit to drink." How very much a boarder at the Astor House would differ from this opinion, is left to the conjecture of the reader; and the extent of that difference may be wider than he is aware of, when it is known that all sorts of edibles, from a bull's liver with beans, or the tail of the same animal with rice, have been recently boiled in the aforesaid kettle.

The frying pan is made to do double duty—in cooking the meat, in the first place, and in baking bread, in the second. The species of bread in constant use is the short-cake, compounded of flour, grease, and water. The dripping of the meat is an essential ingredient in the composition of this cake. The *fricandeau*, therefore, is disposed of, *pro tempore*, by placing it upon a flat stone, if any such should be at hand, and if not, upon some substitute therefor, and flour and water stirred into the grease until it is fit for kneading; and then, "with unwashed hands," it is submitted to the muscular "mauleys" of the miner, in order to undergo that process. When completed, it is placed in the pan, and held over and before the fire, until it is in a state to be masticated. The delicate meal being prepared, the meat and the cake are discussed in due proportions; and as the stomach of the miner has never admitted that unwelcome guest, dyspepsia, his appetite is good, and he freely indulges it, washing down his meal with the decoction from his kettle.

Hunger satiated, he stretches himself on the ground, to court "*balmy sleep*;" and sometimes such is vouchsafed him. Perhaps, however, he is visited by "thick coming fancies" and thoughts of far distant home, and in his visions beholds his loved ones—for what mortal is without such?—exposed to misery and distress, perhaps to despair and death, and he unable to succor them. The agony is too great for endurance, and the rugged sleeper, like "crook-back" upon Bosworth field, awakes to joy, that he has been dreaming; and then, to dispel the gloomy recollections, goes to a store, and pays ten dollars for a bottle of brandy to comfort himself.

Being compelled from necessity to live long on salt provisions, the advent of a drover with cattle for slaughtering is an event that diffuses general rejoicing at the Bar. Then you will see the hungry denizens, with scarce patience to tarry the slaying, the skinning, and cutting up, each eager for his turn, and ready to pay five shillings a pound for whatever he can get; and when the meat is all disposed of, labor ceases, a general *fry* begins, and steams arise very probably like those described by Homer, at the sacrifices of the Greeks or Trojans.

Sometimes this sudden change of diet produces disorders of the stomach and bowels, but the apprehension of such is lost in present indulgence. The whole animal is devoured, and even the turkey buzzards defrauded of those parts which in other places are considered their legitimate dues. To those of delicate appetites, and who have been used to delicate viands and artistical cookery, such feasting is not endurable; and if such a one should be driven to mess with a miner, one dream of Delmonico would drive him to despair.

The costume of the miners is similar to that of the Oregonians which I met with in Sacramento city, which has before been noted. Your old miner, however, outranks others of more recent standing, and is to be known by a beard reaching to the waist, with other excrementitious adornments in proportion. Those who have had a six months' voyage round Cape Horn, or even a journey over the mountains, without trimming themselves, are scarcely fit to show their faces beside your ancient digger in his glory.

There are two females, the wives of Oregonian miners at the Bar, who, as "good wives should," have followed the fortunes and shared the hardships of their husbands; and besides easing them of their culinary operations, by taking the appropriate duty upon themselves, when those are performed, the helps also assist at the rocker and the pan; and undoubtedly, by the conjoint labors of all, they will realize large fortunes, as they have been a long time at the Bar. One refinement produces others, and it is quite probable that the presence of two of the fair sex (both brown as nutmegs) has brought with it a taste for luxury. For tin plates have been added to the *materiel* of the *cuisine* in one or two instances, and it was even whispered, that a knife and fork had been seen.

The right of positive possession, as we have before stated, is held sacred; and so far has the justice or good sense of the miners extended the pandects of Judge Lynch, that *equitable* possession is equally respected. Thus, if certain numbers combine their labors to effect turning the course of the river, and consequently draining a portion of the Bar, they select a proper spot for the purpose, not previously occupied, and when their intentions are made known, and the improvement staked out, no person intrudes upon the ground located, during the process of draining, or after it is perfected. The adventurers, therefore, hold their rights as securely as if they were protected by a *charter* from the Government.

Many have been these combinations, and all have reaped rich rewards for their enterprise and industry, in whatever location they have been undertaken; and in no part of the world would a joint-stock company be surer of greater profits upon their investments than upon the gold streams of California.

While I was strolling about the Big Bar, making examinations and stealing information, I was overtaken by my friend Mr. Marlinspike, who, with the remains of the "handful" borrowed of his fellow sailors, had purchased a rocker and tools, and was seeking a location for his operations.

"Good morning, messmate," said he; "you have cruised in these latitudes, and maybe you could show me whereabouts I had better come to anchor? I've boarded some of these lubberly Oregonians, but you might as well get a civil answer out of a dead porpoise as out of them."

I complied with his request, and pointed out a spot in which the indications were promising.

"And now, messmate, as we say on the fo'castle, one good turn deserves another, couldn't you show me how to manage this jigger?"

"With all my heart," I replied; and setting him to work in digging up the ground, I placed his machine in the proper place and position, and putting in a quantity of the earth he had thrown up, I bade him watch the operation. This he did for some time; and then, taking his place at the rocker, he went through the manual exercise himself. Jack was an apt scholar, and learned rapidly, and by noon he had made a tolerable good yield. When I saw him well inducted, I turned to leave him.

"I say, messmate," said he, "you go according to Gunter, and sail by the soundings laid down in the good book; and if ever you get on your own beam ends, and I am in sight of signals, hang out your buntin', and if I don't bear down to your relief, say Jack Marlinspike's a *soger* and no sailor!" Thrusting out his *fore-foot*, which I shook with hearty good will, while he squeezed mine in his vice, we parted.

I had not long been in my tent, when about an hour to sun-down Jack appeared in high spirits. He had taken possession of an abandoned lodge, close along side of me, and fitted it up, so as to make it quite comfortable.

"Look here, messmate," said he—showing me his earnings; "pretty well for a raw hand; but I am getting into the knack of it."

At this moment a hail was heard, and two men were seen coming down the mountain. The hail was answered by Jack.

"My eyes!" said he; "if there a'nt Ben Bobstay and Harry, coming down under a press of sail. Halloo! messmates; bring to along side; here is capital moorings. Come, heave ahead."

The sailors soon joined each other; and after, (as Doctor Johnson has it) the ordinary conquassation of hands, Jack began.

"Well, what cheer, messmates. How's the weather with you?"

"Stark calm," was the reply; "and our lockers are as empty as a dandy's knowledge box. Here is all the prog we have left;" showing a small quantity of provisions; "and here," exhibiting a flask, "is just enough for a jorum or two, of half and half."

"Well," said Jack, "bring yourselves to an anchor; I am making a pretty good cruise of it, by the help of that gentleman;" pointing to me; "we'll eat our suppers, and have a nip or two at black Betty tonight; and all turn to with a will, in the morning."

"Agreed," replied the others; and foreseeing they were going to make a night of it, I was sure some fun would grow out of their jocund revelry. Sure enough, they were soon, as Sir Andrew hath it, in a "admirable fooling," cracking their jokes, singing all three at full throat—

"O, I'll marry a widow for fun," &c.

When the anthem was ended, one of the new comers broke out:—"Well, Jack, what sort of a cruise had you over, without convoy?"

"Bad enough," was the answer; "I fell in with a bloody grizzly bear, as big as a horse, and he bore down upon me."

"Blood an' ouns," cried the others; "how did you dodge him? did you out-sail him? Come, let us hear!" both of them vociferated.

By this time a gaunt Oregonian, attracted by the melodies of the sailors, made his appearance, and sitting down on a stone, seemed determined to be one of the auditors of the forthcoming narrative.

"Well," said Jack, "as none of the company but this 'ere gentleman, (who, by the by, was the first to answer signals, and crowd all sail to relieve me,) have ever heard it before, I don't care if I tell the story.

"You see, Ben, after we parted company, I made sail for the Bar, hoping that I might fall in with some outward bound craft, and so drop in their wake. But devil a one did I meet with. Hows'ever, I made pretty good weather of it, marking the capes and headlands, as you laid 'em down. All went pretty well for the first twenty-four hours; and the next day, the wind being fair and the weather good, I made a tolerable run of it, until it was time to bring to for the night, and as I was going up the mountain, I thought I might as well tow the horse, who was pretty tired.

"Well, along I jogged till I came to the top, and was looking for some roadstead to cast anchor in, when I heard a devil of a growl. With that the horse gave a *snort*, wore short round, slipped the hawser, and crowded all sail down the road. I looked ahead, and there was a regular roarer, standing up on his hind legs, within five fathoms of me. Well, you see, I was taken all aback, * * * *

"I reckon, stranger," said the Oregonian, breaking in, "that you was most catawompously exflustrated."

"Where might you hail from, shipmate?" said Jack.

"Well, I was raised on the upper fork of the Big Black in *Allebamy*, but I've been a good deal among the nor'-westerns, about fifty four forty, and beyond."

"Well," replied Jack, "though I don't understand your lingo, I can guess what you mean. If you want to know if I was afraid, why, you might just as well ask if old Hull was afraid, when he poured his first broadside into the Guerriere! I was a brat of a boy on board the Constitution then, and *that* was the first time I heard *thunder!*

"I said, I was taken all a-back: now, that may happen to the best helmsman that ever handled the spokes. Well, you see, Ben," he continued, "there stood that b——d bear, grinning and growling like a mutineer in the bilboes. All this while I was gathering stern-way by degrees, until I fetch'd up agin a pine-tree about as big as the main-top-gallant-mast of the Ohio. As I was backing up to the tree, he was coming up slowly—every now and then putting his right fist to his nose, as if he was considering what to do. Well, I whips round the tree, and up I went, like a monkey by the mizzen-stay; and, in a jiffey, was about half-mast high: with that, on he comes, scratching and growling, and looking up at me as I was taking a fresh pull for the crow's nest; and as soon as I had fairly got up, he thought he'd take a turn after me; but the tree was so small, that he could not get more than a length or so, when down he'd go by the run! Well, when I saw that, I thought I'd feel for my cracker, so as to give him a broadside, if he should happen to get up the ratlines; but it had slipp'd out of my belt! 'Well, I'll splice the main-brace, any how,' says I; but, b——t me! I found I had smash'd the bottle, and there wasn't a suck left!

"By this time it was getting darkish; but I could see the bloody, grizzly villain, walking back and fro, looking up, and growling, just for all the world as old Creighton used to do when he was blowing up the reefers on the quarter-deck—giving them broadside after broadside from each battery, as he came about.

"Thinks I to myself, 'He won't be such a blasted fool as to stay there all night—and the coast will be clear in the morning:' but, devil a bit!—he kept it up until broad daylight!—and then, I wish I may be ——, if he didn't try a fresh trick of climbing! This time he seemed to get the kink of it, and up he comes, half a length at a time, stopping to rest at every turn.

"Well, he was about a fathom and a half from me. 'D—— your eyes!' said I, 'I wish I had that pop-gun below there, that I might fire a salute before you board me!' All of a sudden a thought struck me. Thinks I, 'If I can't make him smell powder that way, I'll try him with this,' (taking a handful of Scotch snuff out of his pocket.) So, knowing that the next heave would fetch him nearly at arm's length, I took a handful, and, leaning over and reaching down, as if I meant to lend him a lift up. As soon as he came to, I let him have it in the face and eyes! My eyes, boys! how the beggar sneezed! Well, you see, he let go with his left hand, just to wipe his eyes—and down he went, with a squelch! And then he begun pawing, and tearing at his peepers, and sneezing so, that I thought he'd get his head loose—rolling and tumbling, heels over head, until he was out of sight. Well, there I sat, laughing—thinking, you see, that it was best to let him have a pretty good run off the coast, before I came below: and, by and by, I heard signal-guns in the offing; so I gets down to pick up my cracker, and answer them; at the same time, I thought it was better to stand towards them; and, in a short time, I fell in with this gentleman, sailing with convoy—and there I found my horse; so I gets aboard, and drops into the wake of the fleet as they were steering for the Bar."

"Bravo, Jack!—devilish well spun!" said the two sailors, taking a fresh nip, as Mr. Marlinspike did the same.

"But, Jack," said Mr. Bobstay, "you are a capital hand with your daddles—why didn't you give the fellow the same sauce that Bill Buntline did to a white beggar, up in Baffin's Bay?"

"How was that?" asked Jack, taking a huge pinch of snuff.

"Why, you see," said Ben, "we were up whaling in those latitudes, and got jammed in a pack of ice; and it was dull music, you know: so Bill and I got a couple of bludgeons and slipped over the side, thinking we might kill a seal or so among the flocks: so we made sail for some small icebergs, where there was here and there a patch of water—but couldn't get near enough to the beggars to have a crack at them. At last, Bill got bloody wrathy, and throws his club at one. It fell close aboard of him—and what does the b—— do, but claws hold of it, and carries it under the ice? Well, we gave up the chase, and put about for the ship; and, just as we were rounding an iceberg, which we had not overhauled, we came in sight of a thundering big white bear, not twenty fathoms off."

"'Well,' says Bill, 'we may as well wear ship, and bear down upon t'other tack.' So about we goes, and stood onward; but, as you may suppose, we kept a bright lookout abaft, and by and by, who should we see but the bear crowding all sail in chase. As he was nearing us fast, we hove to, and made the best preparation we could to repel boarders. But as soon as he got to about a boat-hook's length of us, he brought up, and raised himself up on his hind paws, as if he was taking an observation. After a minute or two, seeing he did not come on, we filled away again and made sail. Well, it was not long before up he comes again, and we luffed up, and threw our main topsail to the mast. Then he stops again, raises himself up, and takes another observation, so we filled away once more and stood on. This caper he cut with us three or four times; and the last time we hove to, he wasn't a fathom off. Up he gets again clapping both fists to his muzzle, as if he was spitting in his hands for a fight. 'Blast my eyes!' says Bill; 'I won't stand this any more. Stand by me, Ben, and I'll pitch into him.'

"So Bill off grego, and squared himself, nearing the fellow by degrees, until he was at the proper distance; then he made play at his muns with the left hand, and gives it to him with the right in the bread-basket, and doubles him up like an old jackknife. Well, I sprung forward and let drive at his snout, and gives him another settler. And now Bill out with his knife, and cut the beggar's hamstrings in a jiffey. Well, you see, we had him now, so as we could rake him fore and aft; while Bill fell aboard of him with his knife, sounding between his ribs to find where his heart lay, I was paying away at his figure-head.

"The upshot was, we made a prize of him in five minutes; and getting fresh hands from the ship, we towed him a-board. A precious fat fellow he was, and victualled us for a week.'

"'Well,' said Jack, 'if this had been but a white chap, or one of those black devils about Quoddy, I should not have minded about serving him out, especially if I had had a consort. But these grizzly chaps are no jokers, and I had rather give such customers a wide berth than fall in with them." The '*maut*' was now fast getting '*aboon the meal*,' and the tars had a glorious spree until day-light, and then after a short nap they started up, eat their breakfast, and pushed for the Bar.

The observations of my friend fully coincided with my own, and both became fully convinced of the inexhaustible richness of the bars. The time to which we had limited our stay was expired, and we resolved to commence our return journey to Culloma on the following morning. He to provide merchandize for his intended establishment, and I to make further preparations for more extended explorations of the other forks of the river, and to visit all the diggings of repute in that region.

CHAPTER VIII.

Set out for Culloma—unpromising aspect of the weather—rain—snow-storm—suffer from cold—trail difficult to be followed—reach the burnt tree—find a fire—great comfort derived from it—journey onward—Oregonian guides—come to the place where our friend was lost—sad reflections—camp—arrive at Culloma—find our lost friend—his account of the manner of his escape—proceed to the Spanish bar—fall in with companions—a carral and charge for horse-keeping—Greenwood family—Prince John—negro at a digging—bears and a horse—negro and the bears—Quashy at a dancing party—bear hunt—sailors in distress—starvation of miners—a dose of salts worth seven hundred dollars.

An adequate quantity of provisions was cooked for our passage over by the aid of a borrowed frying-pan—that mystic utensil, which, according to the profane traditions of pestiferous unbelievers, was wont in ancient times to be used as a *Solomon's* seal, to impress upon the most honorable part of the Neophite, an ardent premonition of the devotion to the mysterious personages whose names had been revealed to him, that was required by the vows he had taken.

The morning of the 18th May arrived. There had been much rain during the night, and the dark clouds which overhung the mountain looked angry and portentious of more. Still as in California auguries and the aspect of the elements are seldom consulted by the traveller, we commenced our ascent of the first steep from the bar, quite sure of one thing, that if drenched to the skin, we should be the cooler for the operation. This occurred to us sooner than we anticipated; and before we had made much progress upward, a chilling rain set in, which, as we continued to mount, gradually changed to snow. The ascent was precipitous, and as we led our horses, our advance was slow and painful, so that by the time we reached the place where we were to mount, we found that several inches of snow had fallen, and that the storm, still unabated, was likely to continue for some time.

We had left Culloma when the thermometer was at 90°, and unwisely omitted to provide any change of clothing suitable to so sudden a change of weather. Not a man had taken an overcoat with him, and all were arrayed in light summer dresses. Of consequence we were in a most uncomfortable plight, and shivering with cold. Despite the chattering of their teeth, many found means of articulating anathemas at this specimen of the vaunted mild climate of California; and for myself, I thought if such weather was at all frequent, most other countries in which I had travelled were far preferable to El dorado.

We were all wet to the skin, and the snow continued to fall in heavy flakes, so as to obscure the land-marks of the way, and the trail was entirely covered: consequently, we wandered from the path, traversing much ground, and spent much time in tracing out the proper course. Fortunately, however, we occasionally fell in with some object noted on our passage out, and, almost by a miracle, gained the burnt tree, the "Pharos" of the pilgrims of the Big Bar.

Here, to our exceeding great joy, we found a tent pitched, a large fire burning, and two men, luxuriating in the warmth of it, at the entrance of the tent. Every one dismounted in haste, and crowded about the fire, comforting himself in the best way possible. As soon as the chill and chattering of teeth had subsided, and we had gained the faculty of speech, or, in phrase more germain to the country, "*could make our mouths go off,*" we asked our hosts where they were bound, and by what lucky chance they were at that spot. The answer, half Dutch, half English, was, that they were on their way to the bar, and had lost the trail, and that they had been there two days, waiting the arrival of some one who could put them on the right track. The rencounter, therefore, was as opportune to them as to us, and, at the same time that we furnished the necessary information, we advised them to delay their departure until the storm had subsided. This advice they adopted; and our party enjoyed the benefit of the fire by spinning about, in order to give each side a roasting, much in the manner of a goose suspended before a kitchen fire.

We made a small breach in our store of eatables, and comforted the clay with a small *dose* of the "critter." No doubt we shall fall under the ban of the "teetotalers" therefore; but let the most zealous advocate of temperance be placed in a similar category, and I very much doubt, however he might shut his ears to entreaty, his mouth would readily open to the comforter.

Loath to leave so comfortable quarters; but the storm had a littl abated, and we again mounted, and pushed onward. We had not proceeded far, when we overtook two Oregonians, bound in to Culloma, who were jogging leisurely onward, unannoyed by the elements, and disposed to laugh at the complaints we made of the inclemency of the weather, which, they assured us, was summer sunshine to much they had encountered. For all that, I could not help thinking of the comfortable stopping places, with their good fare, good fires, and comfortable beds, which I had met with elsewhere, and which I now very much coveted. But no such prospect was before us, as we should be obliged to "camp," that is, roost, under such shelter as we could find for the night.

At length we reached the spot where we had lost our poetic friend on our way out, and our own comfortless condition disposed us to sympathise very deeply with the sufferings he must have endured in the situation in which he had been left. What had been his fate, we knew not; but all could imagine the feelings which must have agonized him in his perilous condition, from which there seemed so little prospect of escape, and all were sad and gloomy. We did our best, however, to banish our melancholy reflections, and to partake of the jocundity of our new companions, to whom the mishap of our friend appeared a mere trifle.

One of these made an effort to shoot a kiota; but these cunning animals seem to know the range of a rifle, and keep at such a distance that the most expert marksmen often miss them. Our day's journey was nearly ended, and it was necessary to look out for encampment. This duty was assigned to our northern friends, whose first care was to find proper ground for the accommodation of their *horses*, and then to look out for a log against which to build a fire, and a good tree to sleep under. These having been found and the fire kindled, we prepared to discuss our supper. How a good cup of hot tea or coffee would have relished in such circumstances! was a prominent idea, perhaps, in more minds than one; but cold water was the substitute for these; and at the proper hour, our saddles being disposed as pillows, we rolled ourselves in our blankets, and stretched ourselves to rest. The rain continued throughout the night, but it was not violent; and after a sound sleep, we started up at the dawn, saddled our horses, and pushed on to Culloma, then about six miles distant.

Arrived at Culloma, the first thing that gladdened our eyes was the appearance of our lost friend. Had ghosts formed any part of the population of California, we might have thought that it was the shade of the departed, and not the real presence of our companion, that greeted us so warmly on our arrival. But the hearty shake of his hand gave tangible evidence of his reality; and when convinced of this, all were anxious to hear his adventures and the manner of his escape.

He said, that when he had finished his notes, he supposed that we had not been gone many minutes, (but, doubtless, wrapt in inspiration, "his eye in fine phrenzy rolling," time had imperceptibly fled,) when he proceeded to follow the trail with all possible expedition; this, with some difficulty, he traced to the burnt tree, and then it was irrecoverably lost. He now halloed with might and main, but received no response. He next discharged his rifle, and thought he heard an answering sound in the distance. He fired another shot, and held his breath anxiously for an answering report, but it was echo which he had first heard, and echo alone now answered his signal. Now the sad conviction was forced upon him that he was lost!—that he was alone in the desert mountain, save only the customary tenants of the woods—ferocious wild beasts, and Indians equally dangerous. Farther progress towards the bar was out of question, and he determined to lose no time in retracing his steps to Culloma; and, accordingly, he took that direction until nightfall, and then made choice of the side of a large log as his bed-place.

Gathering a quantity of dried leaves he made as good a shelter as he was able, and limiting himself to a small allowance of supper, he buried himself in the leaves. He had not dared to build a fire for fear of attracting some of the denizens of the forest to his lair; and now, with those mental orisons which naturally suggest themselves on such occasions, he placed his confidence in the power that can protect, and betook himself to sleep.

Rising with the dawn, he again began his journey, devoutly thankful for his preservation, but he was no experienced woodman, and consequently soon became bewildered in the mazes of the forest. His only resort, therefore, was to find the points of the compass, and pursue a direction south, knowing that he must on that course, fall in with the South Fork, which pursued, would bring him to Culloma. The track was sinuous, and was intersected by deep cañons and creeks, these he had to pass with great difficulty, clambering up their precipitous sides by clinging to the roots and brittle branches of trees and shrubs for support. At length, on the third day, he arrived at an eminence from which he got sight of the mill, and then, "rejoicing with exceeding great joy," after having devoured the scanty remains of his provender, he descended in safety to the settlement. "There may be poetry in the retrospection," said he to me as the narrative was concluded, "but devilish little in the reality, I assure you."

My visit to the mines was for the purpose of informing myself of all circumstances in relation to the different locations, and the processes of collecting gold used among them respectively—to form some judgment in regard to the most productive mode of laboring in them, whether by small companies or by larger associations. My stay, therefore, at Culloma was of short duration. I procured a good horse, at the moderate price of one hundred and seventy-five dollars, with the necessary equipments, and supplies of provisions—again crossed the "South Fork;" shaped my course for the "Spanish Bar," twelve miles distant, so called from having been first discovered by a Hidalgo of that nation.

I was fortunate in falling in with two persons who had been at work there, and who had come into Culloma for provisions and were about returning. This junction to me brought many advantages. It made the journey more safe and pleasant, and as they were men of intelligence, who had resided at the Sandwich Islands, I had the means of getting information in relation to the commerce carried on there; but the most valuable information I derived from them was with respect to the business in which they had been some time engaged, of which I did not fail to profit.

Our route lay, for a short distance, along the one I had recently travelled, but we took a sudden turn to the left, passing through a valley. Here, nearly over to the "Middle Fork," there is established a place for the keeping of horses—an enclosure, called a "Carral," where the miners at work in the vicinity, leave their quadrupeds, which are under the charge of the keeper, who turns them out in the morning to feed during the day, and collects them at night. For this service fifteen dollars a month is demanded for each animal, but the keeper does not hold himself responsible for accidents or estrays.

There is in this valley a family of some celebrity, the father of whom is a Kentuckian, named Greenwood. It is said that he was once a considerable trader there; but who either became sick of civilization, or the civil authorities were too inquisitive concerning him, and therefore he abandoned suddenly those settlements, and fled through Missouri to the Rocky Mountains many years ago, and became a trapper and trader. Here he espoused the chief squaw of a powerful tribe, and by that connection, and the peculiar talent which some whites exercise to great success, he obtained a commanding influence over all the red men about. He is now considerably advanced in years, but he is renewed in a large family of half breeds. This individual speaks Spanish as well as his mother tongue, and is familiar with all the savage dialects.

The heir apparent of this dynasty is a "tall fellow," by the name of John; a most worthy representative of his father in all that concerns wood craft, and although half Indian himself, has a decided leaning to the white side of the house, and scruples not to exercise his rifle in any forays which take place with the natives proper. He is a Patagonian in size—is married to a small half breed French girl, who scarcely reaches the waist of her giant husband, and when together they presented a singular contrast.

A short distance from this, we stopped at a spot where a negro was engaged in washing. As information, however small, might be valuable, while my friends were amusing themselves about something else, I strolled down to the Quashy's digging. Of course it was no great things, as he represented it. But,

"Massa!" said he, "I've seen you before."

"Where about, Quashy?" I asked.

"Well, it's no use tellin," said Quashy, with a grin.

So I gave up the inquiry, supposing that he was one of the waiters of the Oregon, who, like my friend Jack, had taken his *discharge*, but not like him, settled accounts with the Purser. As I was about going away, my old acquaintance suddenly broke out—

"Lorra mighty, massa! you don't know how I was skeered yesterday."

"How so?" I asked.

"Well; John, who lives a little back here, asked me jist to fetch up his horse, which comes down here a feedin', in a little opening which turns off the road out dar. So about sun-down I takes my tin pan and goes down to look for 'im. Well, as I went along, jest afore I came to de opening, I tort I'd try to dance a jig, what de sailor men used to sing and dance down at de fort. So I begin—tink a tink, on de tin pan, and singing de words—

Did you eber see de debbil,
Shubble grabble, shubble grabble—
Wid a wooden iron shubble,
And an iron wooden ladle?

"All dis time I was lookin' down to see if I kep de step. Den jist as I turn into de opening, I begin agin—

'Did you eber see de debbil,' &c.

"O, lorra, massa! I hear someting growl, an' I look up an' dar was free of 'em—free of the orfullest big *barrs*, makin' mutton ob dat hoss. I heard de Oregon fellers say, when you meets a *barr* you've got to keep on doin' jis what you've been doin' on afore, or dey will pitch into you. So I tries to keep on singin' and dancin', but my heart was up in my mouf; an' my feet was heavy as lead; an' all I could do was to keep tink a tink a little on de pan. At last I shuv dis foot a little back, an' den todder; an' bym-by, I got a little bref to sing—

'Did you eber, did you eber—'

"All dis while, dem dreffal *barrs* were looking at me, wid de blood runnin' out ob dar moufs. Well, massa, I kep on tink a tink; did you ebber? an' shuv back, faster an' faster, until I slip by de corner ob de clearin'; an' den, massa, if you eber *did* see lightnin' come down a dead pine tree, you see how dis nigger streek it. I run all de way to John's house, and dar I fell down mos' dead. Well, dar I lay puffin' an' blowin' till John come out an' giv me a mouful ob brandy; an' bym-by, I got bref enuf to tell him about it, an' he's goin' to get folks to turn out for a *barr* hunt; but if he ketch dis child goin' I don't belief."

A clattering of hoofs was now heard, and soon the cavalcade made its appearance; some dozen well armed and mounted; freely using their heavy California spurs armed with rowels of the circumference of a dollar, jagged as the teeth of a mill saw. Myself and my companions were invited to join the hunt, but they, for sufficient reasons declined; and I calling to mind that these three grizzly gentlemen might possibly be the same who paid me a visit in my tent on my first journey, and with whom I mentally had made a kind of "treaty of reciprocity," that is, to let each other alone, I made it a matter of conscience not to violate the compact.

The party, however, moved onward, determined to avenge the death of John's horse; that worthy (not the horse,) leading the van; bent upon the sacrifice of a hecatomb of grizzlies, to the manes of his steed. But, perhaps, there were in his train some as *conscientious*, or as pacifically inclined as myself; for, after having gone as far as the carcase of the slaughtered animal, and finding the bears had fled, turned their faces homeward, leaving to the more adventurous, the task of following up the trail. What success attended the expedition, I am not able to say, as on my return to Colloma sometime afterwards, I took a different route.

Jogging onward with my companions, I continued my inquiries in regard to the proceedings at the diggings, and was told many anecdotes of the miners there, which, by all accounts, were composed of much the same kind of people as those I had left at the "big bar." One story convinced me that the nautical diggers were as reckless and as improvident as my friend Jack and his companions.

A party of four of these had fallen upon a bar of the Middle Fork, where they found a good yield until their provisions began to fail. Unwilling to knock off as long as the gold continued abundant, they determined to retain three days short allowance of provisions, and to despatch one of their number to Culloma, for a supply. The messenger was not sent with empty pockets; consequently, a splice or two of the main brace was the first thing to begin with. Nip followed nip, as he was joined by one jolly fellow or another, until Jack was in for a regular spree, and entirely forgot himself and his starving companions; these, notwithstanding their abstemiousness, soon got to the end of their stock, but comforted themselves for a while in the hope of signals from their messenger, announcing his approach with relief. The whole day was spent without food, and in constant expectation of a hail from their messmate, but no such welcome sound came down the mountain side. As soon as the morning dawned, one of their number was despatched with the needful, to Culloma, hoping to fall in with the relief by the way, and to hasten it onward; but he heard nothing of the messenger until he arrived half famished at Culloma, and found him bowsing away in a high gale.

A can of grog and some prog was given him, and by the time the food was cupboarded, it had been worked down with such frequent potations, that all recollections of the object of his journey and of the starving condition of his messmates was worked away also, and the new comer was as far seas-over the ocean of forgetfulness as him he came to seek.

The condition of the two left behind had by this time become deplorable indeed; they made a tea of fir leaves, and gathered lichen from the mountain side, and were fortunate enough to find a few acorns, with which they kept life in them for a few days, after the departure of their friend, whom they would both have followed, had sufficient strength been left them for the effort; and they were almost at the point of despair, with their eyes strained up the path, in the vain effort to catch a glimpse of their messenger. At length they perceived an object approaching. Surprised that no signal was given, and too feeble to hail the person in view, they lay in their lair, devoured by surprise as well as exhausted by famine, until they were joined by a solitary adventurer, with a small load of provisions on his back.

The famished sailors eagerly sought to purchase a part of these, but the proprietor at first refused to part with any; but at length, with much entreaty, and for the consideration of dust equivalent to two hundred dollars, he sold them ten pounds of flour, and half that quantity of pork, with three or four pounds of pilot bread. With this opportune supply the sailors recruited their strength, so as to enable themselves to depart for Culloma, in order to discover whether their messmates had foundered by the way, or lay wind-bound there. They found them in the latter condition; and after giving them a small blowing up, they were soon caught in the same gale, and were driving away before it, as drunk as their companions. My companions related many stories of exorbitant prices offered at the mines. One famished customer offering one hundred dollars for a ham bone, which was refused; and another, in the extremity of disease, who was desirous to buy a dose of salts, for which the seller demanded seven hundred dollars. But the sick man chose rather to die than to be so choused of his dust. These kind of colloquies continued until we came to the descent of the mountain, to the Spanish Bar.

CHAPTER IX.

Arrival at the Spanish Bar—easy descent—distances computed by time—a company formed to work the bar explodes—another association succeeds—Ford's Bar—Kelsey's Bar—proceed to the "North Fork"—Williams' Rancho—submarine armor used with success—gold of the North Fork—Rumors of Indian hostilities—North Fork more easy of access than the others—consequent cheapness of supplies—home-sick miners—their complaints—project for diverting the river—proceed to the Juba—easiness of access from Sacramento—low banks—Foreigners—Kanakas—diving for gold—dust fine—Feather River—Indians first employed—return—branches of the Middle Fork—no gold in the South branch—Rector's Bar—depredator punished—exploration of the explorers—unsuccessful attempt to turn the river—proceed down the river—Horse Shoe Bend—susceptible of improvement—suffer from thirst—stooping to drink—disturbed by a rattle-snake—a conquest—Indian superstitions—dreams—Markham's cut or dam projected—lizards—more dreams—Volcano Bar—diving bell—reach Big Bar—increase of population.

The path was not nearly as high or as steep as the one leading into the ravine of the Big Bar. It was well worn, and we found no difficulty in keeping the saddle, even down to the bed of the river, from whence we sent our horses back to the *carral*. The Spanish Bar is said to be twelve miles below the Big Bar, and four below Ford's. The reader will understand that these distances are assumed from the time which is employed in going from one point to another; in the same mode as was in use in the olden time, or as the Dutch reckon distances, by the number of pipes smoked in travelling them; and therefore cannot be supposed to be accurately computed. And indeed I have often thought, when exhausted with fatigue, and near, as I supposed, the end of my journey from one to the other, and I found a "*bittock*" was yet before me, that a long-legged Scotsman must have been the first surveyor.

This bar was one of the first discovered, after that at the mill, and has produced vast quantities of metal, and was considered yet extremely rich at the time of my arrival. In the early discovery, a company was formed at Culloma, consisting of eighty persons, with a design of turning the river, by means of dams and raceways, so as to reach the richer deposits in its bed. The president, with the other necessary officers, even to the *cook* of the company, were chosen; but some flinching from the undertaking, the scheme was abandoned, and very unwisely, as a small number of individuals, with less disposable means, and by the simple erection of "bracket dams," without excavations, obtained an ample remuneration for their labors and expenses.

I clambered along the rocks and river bank, upward to "Ford's Bar." This bar, as well as some smaller ones below it, is very difficult of access, on account of the steepness of the slaty paths down the mountain. All along, on my progress upward, great complaint was made of the high stage of the water; yet all were doing well. Ford's Bar is not so large as the Spanish Bar. It took its name, as is usual, from the first discoverer, who gathered an immense quantity of gold upon it, but was compelled to suspend his profitable labors, in consequence of illness; and despairing of recovery without medical aid, he caused himself to be transported on a litter, borne by six men, to Colloma, where he was fortunately restored to health. There had been much sickness, and many casualties here, and, a few days before my arrival, a man fell from a canoe, while drunk, and was drowned.

There are two stores at this place, one on each side of the river, at which provisions and other commodities are sold at enormous prices, of which the following are specimens:—Pork, $2; flour, $1; beans and rice, each $1; sugar, $1; raisins and nuts, $2, per pound respectively. Brandy, $8; ale, $6; and vinegar, $4, a bottle. Here the necessary machines are also sold; some of which, in the early discovery of the gold, had been sold at $100 or $150, were now to be had at more moderate prices. I found things much in the same condition at Kelsey's Bar, four miles farther up, the operations on which were also in a thriving condition.

I now returned to the Spanish Bar, retracing my steps over rocks and around precipices, encumbered by my blankets and provisions, which made the route very fatiguing. It was my determination to proceed over to the "North Fork." I therefore sent for my horse; and having despatched him across the river, by the primitive mode of ferrying, I got over in an India-rubber boat, which had been brought from New-York by one of my fellow passengers in the Oregon. This answered very well for passengers with light loads, but would not answer for horses.

About midway, between the Middle and North Forks, is situated Williams' Rancho. This gentleman had formerly resided about three miles from Culloma, but had removed, with his flocks, herds, and other property, to his present residence, situated in a beautiful valley of the mountain, where he and his family were willing to minister to the comforts of travellers, by furnishing the luxuries of soft bread, butter, milk, &c., at California prices. Here were to be found many of the comforts of civilization, prepared by the delicate hands of those beings so essential to the happiness of man. Verily the sight of these and their rosy-cheeked offspring were gladdening to the heart of a Californian wayfarer; and I could not refrain from catching up each little cherub, as they flocked about me, and hugging it to my bosom.

Mr. Williams had procured a sub-marine armor, and it was in very successful operation on the Middle Fork, at the time of my arrival there, although it requires several men to work it, and one of great experience to descend to the bottom. Two persons are employed at the pump, and one to conduct the hose, by means of which the air is forced down sufficient for respiration below. The motions of the machine are directed by signals from below, by means of a cord reaching above; and the position is thus changed from place to place. By skilful management, the person that conducts the machine can remain submerged several hours; and his time is most profitably employed, several hundred dollars having been frequently washed out of a single panful, and the labors of a day often yield thousands.

For fear of growing effeminate, I was compelled to abridge my stay at the quiet retreat of Mr. Williams, and therefore, on the next day I set forward for the "North Fork." The distance across, from Fork to Fork, varies, according to the point of departure; that from the Spanish Bar being estimated about ten miles. I found the particles of the gold of the "North Fork" much more minute than at the other two places: indicating greater purity in the metal, and making it almost indispensable to use quicksilver, in order to collect it, as twenty-five per cent. at least, was lost by the ordinary mode. Here, as at the other forks, great complaint was made of the high water, and of the indolence and inefficiency of the *tame* Indians, while no little apprehension was felt for fear of an incursion from the *wild* ones at the sources of the river. Many reports were in circulation of murders committed by them, but as no expeditions were set on foot to punish the depredators, the reports, most probably were exaggerated.

Supplies on the "North Fork" are generally cheaper than at the "Middle," owing to the facility of reaching it by teams, from Sacramento City, for the greater part of the distance, where the loading is to be carried on the backs of horses or men. The American river is crossed by this route, a few miles above Sacramento, and the west side of the "North Fork" is the one chiefly travelled. At the mines, as well as at the Isthmus, I was astonished to see the heavy loads which a single person would be able to carry. I think the old rule of the North-west Company was one hundred pounds for each *voyageur;* but the diggers, in their perigrinations, carry a much heavier weight.

I found here, many individuals very little calculated to rough it on miner's fare, and undergo the miner's toil—many of whom had never handled anything "without gloves," and whose delicate digits were exceedingly reluctant to form acquaintance with the pick-axe or shovel. These poor home-sick fellows had left traces of their *mal du pays* wherever they had stopped; and on the blazed trees would be discovered their dolorous Jeremiads, inscribed with red chalk:—"California! O California! would that we never had sought thee! Land of fair promises, and disappointed hopes! how drear! how desolate!" Others were more laconic and would write—"We have seen the elephant! *O he jam satis.*" The names and former residences of the writers would frequently be appended, but I had no curiosity to copy them. A company was about to be formed for the purpose of turning the river from its bed, which promised great advantages.

The "North Fork" being explored, I turned my steps towards the Juba River, accompanied by several others from the "Forks." The banks of this river I found entirely different from those of the branches of the American. They were low, and traversable by teams, all the way from Sacramento City. Freight was frequently sent from that place by water, to the mouth of the Juba, (at which the new City of Vernon is situated,) and up that stream, as far as it is boatable. Here were more foreigners than at any of the places which I had visited, but no collisions had taken place between them and the Yankees. A great many Sandwich Islanders, or "*Kanakas*," as they are called, were also here, diving for gold. They are most expert swimmers and divers; and at home, half their time is spent in the water; but they could not endure the cold water of the rivers so well as the ocean water about their native islands. They chiefly confine their efforts to this mode: taking to the bottom with them something to hold the earth, and coming to the surface with their vessel, when filled. Then the use of the tin pan completes the process. Sometimes they find it expedient to remove rocks of some magnitude, and then a sufficient number go down together, with crow-bars, and tug at it until the obstacle is removed. Often they make, what is called by the miners, "a big raise," and then a shout goes up, which makes the hills resound, followed by loud exultations, in the Kanaka tongue, which, to my ear sounded like that of a thick-lipped negro, with a hot potato in his mouth. These Islanders are generally of a good size, and well formed, with straight black hair, fine and glossy, and pleasant and intelligent countenances.

The particles of metal here, like those of the North Fork, are very minute, and the same may be said of the Feather River. When these diggings were first discovered many adventurers brought Indians to labor for them, and by that means accumulated large fortunes. These places, although less healthy than the Forks, were well populated, and shops, with supplies, were established at various points. The probable cause of the prevalence of more sickness on these rivers, is the sluggish currents, flowing as they do, through a more level country. These remarks will apply to the Bear River, a tributary of the Feather, upon which much gold is found.

On my return to the "Middle Fork," I took a course nearly south, which brought me to the "North Fork" higher up than at the point where I had crossed it. From thence I struck the *north* branch of the Middle Fork at Rector's Bar, eight miles above the Big Bar, and two above the junction of the *south* branch of the Middle Fork. These two branches, which rise in the Sierra Nevadas, form the far-famed Middle Fork. The south branch is barren, but much gold is found in the most northern one, and Rector's Bar had proved a profitable digging.

At this place I was shown a man, who, not having "the fear of God before his eyes," and equally regardless of the majesty of Judge Lynch, had stolen from his unsuspecting neighbor the fruit of his toil, amounting to the value of six hundred dollars. The offence was flagrant, and the culprit was formally arraigned and brought to trial before a jury of *six*. They found him guilty, and condemned him to the whipping-post, where he was to receive thirty lashes upon his bare back. These were to be inflicted by the person who had been robbed; probably in the belief that out of *tenderness* to the offender he would *not spare the rod.*

These were well laid on, and doubtless had a salutary effect in convincing the malefactor, that although legislative enactments did not abound in California, others of more potency *did*, and that the formidable pandects of Judge Lynch were not thereafter to be neglected. Your wide-awake miner not only looks sharp to his own movements, but watches with great care those of his neighbor, that he may not be behind him in this progressive age; and, therefore, if a party return from "prospecting," and forthwith set about collecting supplies, the conclusion in his mind is, that some great discovery has been made, and therefore it behoveth him to take measures to participate in its benefits.

Just as I arrived at Rector's, one of these events took place; and on the return of the exploring party for fresh supplies, sundry of their neighbors loaded their packs in order to follow them in their return, quite sure of falling in with hoards of the precious dust. Keeping on the trail so as to be out of view, they followed for several days, until they found out that their neighbors had made *no discovery*, and both giving up the chase, returned together to the Bar. The laugh was now against the cunning ones, and they were fain to commute the ridicule they had incurred by libations of brandy, of which both parties participated, "pottle deep," until they were tired of the carousal.

The bed of the river at Rector's Bar, is rocky, and the process of collecting the deposits is attended with severe labor. There are small bars above, but the gold diminishes as you advance upwards. There had been an attempt to obviate the difficulty by turning the river from its course, but having been undertaken by inexperienced persons, the dam was not properly constructed, and failed to produce the desired effect. But there can be little doubt that a better erection, and more extensive excavation, would have crowned the labors of the adventurers with success.

I now formed the resolution of sending my horse to a carral, on the road to Culloma, and to proceed down the river on a tour of observation. I had not advanced far when I came to a remarkable curve in the course of the stream, which, after a sweep of nearly two miles, forms what is called a *teton* on the Mississippi. The narrowest part of this peninsula is but sixty or eighty feet across, and the place is known by the very appropriate name of the "Horse-shoe Bend." Here is a most admirable place through which to divert the channel of the river. A short dam, of no great elevation, would arrest the course of the water, and force it through a straight cut across the heel of the bend. This cut could easily be made to carry off the water, and to leave a large extent of the river bottom entirely bare. No place could be better adapted for improvement at small expense, and none presents so great opportunity for a Joint Stock Company to enrich themselves at small hazard; and possession is secured for the purpose. Satisfied with my observation of the Horse-shoe, I took a course through the woods, at some distance from the river, in order to shorten the distance. The day was exceedingly hot, and the rays of the sun descending perpendicularly, were most powerful, while not a breath of air was stirring in the valley. Exhausted with fatigue and thirst, I was most anxious to find some stream at which I could allay it, and after a very diligent search, I saw the indications of water in the foliage at some distance beyond. Thitherward I hied, and was rejoiced to hear the rushing of the brooklet as I advanced, and reaching a small glade, I crowded to the water's edge, and was in the act of stooping down to quench the burning thirst that devoured me, when I was arrested by a startling noise, (better remembered than described,) between a drumming and a hissing sound. I sprang backward, and casting my eye on the spot upon which I was about to place my hand, coiled in the grass, with head erect, sparkling eyes, and protruded tongue, was an enormous rattle-snake! The bound which I had made backward had placed me beyond the reach of the spring which he seemed to meditate; and, drawing my revolver, and dropping upon my right knee, resting my elbow on the left, "no second stroke intending," I took a steady aim at the throat of my adversary and discharged my pistol.

I can truly say, that whatever powers of fascination this dangerous reptile may have possessed, he charmed not me; but, as he disappeared on the report, and with some hurried movement, I was much encouraged to hope that my shot had taken effect; and, properly prepared for another salvo, I approached the stream and looked over the bank. To my great joy, I discovered the *serpent* writhing in his agony, and with his head nearly severed from his trunk. I gazed upon the varying hues of his chequered skin of black and green, and blessed my stars that I had not felt the deadly fang to which I had been so nearly exposed.

The Indians of the lakes used to hold these animals in superstitious veneration, and deprecated the resentment of the survivors of all such as were killed by strangers in their company; calling the victim *father*, beseeching its manes not to visit them in wrath. But I am told that this custom has fallen into disuse, and that many do not scruple to kill them for food, and sometimes they are imitated by the whites in this respect; and it is said to be a most palatable viand. The oil is considered a specific for rheumatism, but must be cautiously used, as it relaxes the tendons, so as to produce debility. Like a valorous knight of old, I possessed myself of the *horn* of my enemy, by way of spoil, and left his *arms* behind me. There were twelve rattles, which indicated a snake of fourteen years growth.

After this successful exploit, I stretched myself out to rest, but I must admit that my slumbers were not the most quiet and refreshing. Innumerable snakes were flitting before my "mind's eye," and the horrid rattle of the slain one rung harshly in my ear, as I suddenly awoke;

and having little inclination to meet any more of the *crotalus* family, either in imagination or reality, I made my way onward.

I soon arrived at a place called Markham's Cut—a place where a race had been begun, but suspended until the high water should subside—I examined the spot, and became fully satisfied that if this improvement is judiciously made, immense emoluments must accrue to the projectors.

Here, by the side of a fine spring, I sat myself down to my frugal meal of "jerk beef and hard tack"; and this ended, I amused myself with watching the lizards, as they were roaming around, and snapping the flies which came near them: these are a harmless kind, but there are some kinds in tropical climates that bite; and although the bite is not mortal, it often proves exceedingly painful and difficult of cure. I grew drowsy, and again composed myself for a nap. But though Somnus was propitious, so far as to "steep" some of my "senses in forgetfulness," still my imagination was as disturbed as ever. I saw no snakes nor heard any larums of their rattles, but the lizards were *legion*, and seemed to scramble about and over me, large as young alligators, and soon awaking, I descended the river.

It was not long before I reached the Volcano Bar; and finding a party busy with a diving-bell, I stopped to witness their operations. They were doing well; but the sub-marine armor was immeasurably a better contrivance, and neither could be so productive, as if by a draining process, the bars were laid bare.

I arrived at the Big Bar at evening, and found all pursuing their labors industriously and profitably. My friend had brought over his goods, and was disposing of them rapidly, selling a large share of all that was vended. Here I found quite a change of population: Quondam merchants, farmers, lawyers, mechanics, doctors, and sailors. With these were more than a reasonable mixture of black-legs, and I fear other thieves of different sorts. But amid this motley group, there were no *Preachers*, as few such can be found who would not have devoted more time to Mammon than to the Deity.

CHAPTER X.

Improvements at the Big Bar—one company have great success—another formed with prospects of immense returns—runner work—necessary journey to San Francisco—depart for Culloma—carral—find Quashy—repetition of his story—proceed onward—heat of the weather—find again the happy valley—new route—fatiguing journey—arrive at Culloma—find a landlady—immense improvements—Aladdin's lamp—new bridge—increase of population—Mr. Marlinspike again—nautical classics—Ben Bobstay—critique of the Eneiad—Jack upon Homer—new version of the Odyssey—nautical comments—humbugs—Trinity river—Trucky river—masses of gold—the tricky doctor.

Much improvement had been made in every respect in the process of obtaining gold, during my absence from the Bar. A company of twenty had been formed, who had constructed a bracket-dam at the head of the Bar, by which a small part had been drained; and this had been worked to enormous profit, yielding three or four ounces a day to each of pure gold in coarse grains. Such was the success of an association of limited means, and operating against many disadvantages.

The good fortune of this company induced other adventurers to imitate them, and forty of them organized themselves, choosing an old Californian miner as president, with a treasurer and secretary of experience, and four directors. This company had began their work systematically, and a splendid race cut through the Rocky Bar opposite the Big Bar, had been partly completed, fourteen feet wide, of sufficient depth to carry off the water, and which would be about two hundred and thirty yards long. The whole structure would be a creditable specimen of workmanship in any country. A dam of adequate length, campact and tight, diverts the water from the bed of the river, leaving it free to the operations of the miners. The descent of the race is about eleven feet, furnishing an excellent water power, which some ingenious Yankee will contrive to use to advantage in mining operations.

Immense rocks required to be removed by main force, and much blasting had been done, the tools for which were forged on the spot. A hand bellows had been employed to keep in flame a quantity of bark, the succedaneum for coal; and the head of an old axe driven into a stump was used as an anvil. By this important movement, a small portion of the bar, and the bed of the river adjacent to it, had been uncovered, and the labor of several years could hardly suffice to exhaust the metal it contained. The expense of this undertaking will probably exceed fifty thousand dollars; but as with only a third of the company employed, they were collecting about fifty pounds a week, the investment could not fail to produce a splendid fortune to each of the stockholders.

The amount already realized, and that in prospect, from the enterprise of these individuals laboring under so many difficulties, affords the most convincing proof that a joint stock association, properly organized and judiciously managed, would make heavy dividends of profits to those who might engage in it.

Satisfied with my various explorations, I resumed my washing operations and continued them without intermission for several weeks, but the time had arrived, when the Brooklyn, upon which I had shipped some provisions round Cape Horn, might be expected at San Francisco, I resolved to knock off work and go in search of my cargo. Accordingly, on the 26th of August, having taken an early cup of coffee as earnest of a breakfast when up the mountain, myself and two friends started at day-break for Culloma, intending to stop at the carral to which I had sent my horse. On my arrival there, I was glad to find the *ostelere* was no other than my friend Quashy of the *barrs*. While we were discussing our prog, and an assistant of our sable host was in search of our horses, Quashy repeated his adventure, and described his saltatory performance before the grizzly trio.

"Why, Quashy;" said one of my friends, "how came it that the grizzly rascals did not make mutton of you instead of the horse?"

"Well, I don't know, massa," said Quashy, with a grin; "unless he like to see good dancin'. But, by golly," he continued, flashing his ivory more extensively, "I don't want to dance that 'ar jig agin, afore sich company."

The messenger sent after the horses now came up with three, but mine was not among them; but as my friend, the owner of one of those which were caught, offered him to me for the journey, in order to escape delay while my own was sought for, I gladly accepted the offer; and about noon we were on our road to Culloma. There was *now* no difficulty in finding the trail, so much had been the travelling to and fro, that it resembled a dusty road more than a blind path which we had found so much difficulty in following. The weather, too, was as much changed as the road we were travelling; and, instead of a cold snow-storm, we were trudging along under a burning sun, with the mercury at 110°. The extreme heat drove us to seek shelter, which we soon found, in that beautiful sylvan shade described in my passage over; and which I again beheld with no little pleasure.

A new route had been discovered through the cañon, which carried us out in a direction avoiding the spot at which we had so grievously deplored the loss of our poetic friend; and by leading our horses up a steep and sandy ascent at the head of the cañon, we reached the summit of the mountain, and urged our steeds at a reasonable speed, so as to be able to reach Culloma before dark, that we might have light to descend into the valley. But in consequence of the extreme drought, and the woods having been burnt over by the Indians, our horses could proceed but slowly. Very little water could be found; no rain, except a small shower, had fallen since May, yet the leaves on the trees remained green.

It was long after night-fall, when, covered with dust, fatigued and hungry, we arrived at Culloma; and were glad to find the progress of civilization such, that for a California price (12*s.* a meal) we could have supper and room upon the floor for the night. Ablutions, however, were necessary preliminaries; and the river being at hand, these were duly performed, when we did our devoir to the savory meats prepared by our landlady, a Yankee matron who had recently arrived.

As soon as it was day, I took a walk, in order to view the alterations which had been made since my advent at the Mill; and was absolutely surprised at the extent of the improvement. It seemed that some fortunate Aladdin had secured a slave of the lamp to construct so many erections in so short a time. Both sides of the river had been extensively built upon, but the south side, as it ever will have, had the preponderance. It is a pity that Mr. Sutter could not have engaged one of Aladdin's devils to keep the saw-mill, for all the industry of the water wheels could not supply lumber fast enough for building; and resort was had to cloth for the covering of frames, and to tents for temporary shelter.

The reader will recollect that at our first crossing the South Fork, a small scow, sufficient to carry the owner and three bipeds, was the only ferry-boat; for the use of which we paid two dollars each. Now, a convenient bridge, with a *tall house* at the end of it, had been erected, under a Californian *charter;* and the Oregonian who had erected it, was content with the moderate sum of twenty-five cents for crossing. The new town (it has not yet dubbed itself a city), presented a scene of great activity. Teams were constantly arriving and departing for Sacramento. Signs of shops and stores, with those of doctors', barbers,' and dentists', formerly comprising one profession, but now each branch doing business *per se.* Rum poles and gambling-houses were also sufficiently numerous.

Passing along the door of a house where the best of all kind of liquor was advertised, I perceived my nautical friends who had left the Big Bar, with pockets full, several days before me, enjoying themselves *to some purpose.* I love to study *Jack*, whether "*going large*," or on a "*bowline*," and now the trio were full "afore it," and in high glee; and being hailed by Mr. Marlinspike, I, as he requested, "brought myself to an anchor" among them. It seemed that Jack's adventure in the tree top had been on the tapis; for the youngest of the three, Harry Handspike, exclaimed—"My eyes and limbs, *Jack*, what a figure you must have cut in the 'crow's nest,' like a punished reefer sent to the top-gallant cross trees; blast me! if I don't think you're the first sea dog that was ever mast-headed by a bear; why the devil didn't you make sail after your horse, and run him 'hull down.'"

"Why," replied Jack, "I did not think I could work that traverse, and so, as the chaplain of the Ohio, when I was up the Mediterranean in her, used to say, 'I was between *Skilly* and *Carrybiddy*,' and I thought 'twas best to go aloft."

"Skilly and Carrybiddy!" says Harry; "who the devil are they? Some of your old landladies along shore, I'm thinking."

"No, no!" interrupted Ben; "I know all them, from Passamaquoddy to Point Isabel, and devil a one answers that hail."

"You see—ever since that 'ere cruise we made under old Isaac, when Jack was all the while sculling about the Bay of Messina, when the ship lay there with the chaplain and the ladies, he every now and then pumps up a blasted deal of dictionary bilge water. I'm —— You won't believe it? but if he did not keep us awake all one watch below, reeling out a long yarn about a lubberly Trojan from somewhere about the Dardanelly, who, getting into a stiff Levanter, was run out of his course, and boxed about in all weathers, until he brought up at a place called Carthage, somewhere to the south'ard and west'ard of Sicily, where the queen, who was a widow, made a great fuss with him, and who victualled him and all hands for a month. Well, all this while the lubber was making love to his landlady; and everybody thought he was as good as married to her. But all of a sudden he takes it into his head that his —— of a mother would not like the match; and so he sneaks off, and made sail in the night, and leaves the poor widow in the lurch, who tucked herself up with her garters, out of love for a lurching rascal, that deserved to be keel-hauled.

"And then he had a long rigmarole about *Slychops* and *Lustyguns*, and said, 'That in those days there were chaps along the coast so tall, that one of them could stand upon the kelson of a line of battle-ship, and reach to the main cross trees,' and all such stuff as that, enough to make a *spoony* of him."

"Well," replied Jack, "didn't you stretch both ears open to hear it? I tell you what—a seaman isn't any the worse for knowing a little longshore lingo, if so be it *don't* make a *spoony* of him; and you can't say, Ben, that I ever flinched duty ashore or afloat."

"Why, aye; all that's true, I must say that," responded Ben.

"But Jack," said Harry, "let's hear who them doxies was, with such devilish queer names?"

"Well," said Jack, freshening his nip; "if so be, as Mr. Bobstay has no objections."

"Never mind Ben," said Harry, "he'll be as glad to listen as an old maid at a tea-party; so reel away."

"Here goes, then," said Jack. "You see, when old Hull—and a precious good seaman he was—was ordered to hoist blue Peter for the Mediterranean station, he took a fancy to take the she Commodore and her sister along for company—and devilish good company it was. But you see Madam wanted a thundering sight of sea-room; and she ousted some of the luffs from the great cabin to make a parlor of it;

and then they shoved some of the ward-room officers out of *their* berths; and they were obliged to go down to the *orlop*, and swing their hammocks there.

"Well, some of the officers got a little *grouty*, and did not go on the quarter-deck, but used to get on the fo'castle, and sometimes in the galley, when the fires were out, and spin yarn with the reefers.

"Well, you see, we had a capital fellow of a chaplain aboard, who was up to all logs that ever were written; and he used to join 'em sometimes, and spout Latin and Greek like a real Trojan.

"Well, as I was saying, the parson would lug out a great book, which he said was all heathen Greek; not such stuff as they jabber along the Morea, and up the Archipelago. I looked into it one day, and blast me, if the letters didn't look for all the world like Penguin tracks upon a sand-bar.

"This ere book, the parson said, was next to the Bible, the best that ever was made; and that one Alexander, who, he said, was the same as the bloody Turks called Scanderbeg, had one, which he always carried about with him in a gold box."

"'Avast, Jack!' said Ben; 'belay that. There wa'nt any chap named Alexander in them times but Alexander, the coppersmith.'

"Belike, then," replied Jack, "that he was the fellow; and if so be, he was a tinker, as you say he was. His gold box might have been nothing but copper after all; but that's neither here nor there.

"Well, you see, there was one of the reefers had the same log in English; and when the parson would thunder out the Greek for a spell, the reefer would reel it out after him; and so I got hold of the matter;—and there it did say that there were a set of chaps called Slychops, a hundred feet or more tall, who kept a smithy on Stromboli, and did the iron-work for old Jovy's rockets, and manufactured skull-caps and brass jackets for the big bugs of them times.

"Well, as Ben says, when the ship was lying at Messina, the ladies, with the parson and the reefers, would go ashore in the commodore's barge; and I was starboard bow-oar of that craft; so, you see, I heard a great deal about the Straits, which, it seemed, were devilish ticklish navigation in those days, because, as it was logged there, you had to nick the chance of the last of the flood and a fair wind, and steer sharp, keeping in the middle of the channel, or else you'd meet with the rubbers.

"Cause why? As near as I could make it out, there was one of them bloody she Slychops, a thundering brimstone Bess, called Carrybiddy, with a club of iron as big as the main-mast of a three-decker, stood ready to whack it into you amidship, if you went on her side, whereby you was sure to founder; and then, on tother side, there was an ugly nine-eyed ——, as big as she was, who used to take out six of the crew for a snack, by way of custom-house duty.

"Well, the story ran, that a skipper of that day, and as prime a navigator as any afloat, undertook to go through that ticklish passage, "But you must know the craft in them times had a blasted queer rig, which was one mast amidship, with a thundering big square sail, and they wouldn't go on a bowline at all; so when the wind came ahead, they were obliged to down sail, and take to the oars.

"Now, as I was telling you, this skipper had to go through the Straits; and instead of waiting for a favorable time of tide and a fair wind, what does the lubber do but try to crack her through, at half-ebb, with the oars!

"Well, on he comes. Here was Skilly on the starboard side, and tother —— on the larboard; and the skipper stood amidship conning. Just as they got up with them, up went the iron club. 'Starboard!' sung out the skipper; and down comes the club, scaring the man at helm out of his senses, and he clapp'd it *hard aport*. 'Starboard!' again sung out the skipper. 'Starboard it is,' said the pilot. But it was too late: the tide took her; and just then two of the starboard bow-oars broke short in the rullocks, and smack she swung right into the muzzle of Skilly.

"Well, the job was soon done. She picks out six of the primest sailors in the ship; and off went the skipper, snivelling like a baby!"

"Blast my wig!" said Harry, "if that 'ere pilot oughtn't to have been swung up to the yard-arm!"

"That," said Ben, "would have been right, if so be he was a regular pilot, but suppose he was only doing ordinary duty at the helm—I *don't* think the rules of the service would justify it."

"Well, I think," said Harry, "he ought to have been strung up any-how. What say you, Jack?"

Jack's muzzle was in the can, and no immediate reply was given; and I, with a "Good-bye, my hearties," took leave, without staying to hear the sage opinion of Mr. Marlinspike.

Rumors were constantly arriving of new discoveries in various quarters. One ascribed great riches to the Trinity River, which rises near the sources of the Sacramento, and flows to the Pacific; and many started for it, with great expectations, but returned disappointed. There is gold there, but it is in such small quantities that the harvest is not worth the labor. Besides, the expenses of living there were so enormous, that if even the gold were more abundant, the profit would be small. These frequent reports are probably circulated by persons who have made establishments in the localities, and wish for their own benefit, to give notoriety to them. One of the most considerable of these humbugs was set afloat by a certain doctor, who had come over the mountains in company with several families, among which were a reasonable sprinkling of women and children. The M. D. had been obliged to leave a large part of his *truck*, among which was his medical library and instruments, at a place called Trucky River, snugly deposited in a *cache*, or hiding place, on the mountain. Anxious to recover his effects, but unwilling to undertake the expedition without a large escort, he set on foot a story of the arrival of mules heavily laden with large lumps of the purest metal, and that it was to be had for the picking up and carrying away.

The whole town was in a hubbub, and every one who had the means of transportation was agog to be at the gathering. A cavalcade was soon in motion, provided with implements to separate the *large masses*, as a piece weighing more than one hundred and fifty pounds would be inconvenient to handle. As the Doctor was known to have been some time at that spot, reference was made to him with respect to the truth, and he *remembered* to have heard whispers of the great discovery while there, but *then* he doubted the fact. As the Doctor was a good guide to the spot, for a California consideration to him "in hand duly paid," he consented to head the party, and off they went. After a tedious journey through the broiling sun, which threatened to dissolve them, they reached the Sierra Nevada, where they were compelled to wade through its eternal snows, to the great discomfort of themselves and their animals of burthen; at length they reached the Trucky River of the Tricky Doctor. No gold was to be found, or any confirmation of the report that any had ever been heard of! Now came down a thundering shower of curses upon their leader, who put them by as well as he could. In the meantime he uncovered his property, which, packed upon the back of a spare mule, he mounted his horse, and coolly advised his friends to return with all possible expedition, intimating that so soon as the Indians got wind of their proximity, they would be down upon them sans ceremony. There seemed to be some *reason* in the Doctor's counsel; and, although the more exasperated were disposed to Lynch the deceiver on the spot—a process strictly within the rules of the Judge's practice—the more prudent, thinking the Doctor the best guide of the party, consented that he should lead them homeward. And home he did lead them, making a triumphant entry into Culloma, with his paraphernalia of scalpels, forceps, saws, and tourniquets, and the next morning he was called upon to operate upon the jaws of divers of the adventurers, who had caught a "tawmond toothache" among the snows of the Sierra, and to give "potions and motions" to divers others who had got agues on the journey.

The threats of vengeance against the imperturbable Doctor daily subsided; the laugh was loud against the *gulls;* and they, in self-defence, joined in the merriment, acknowledging that the Doctor was a devilish keen chap, and had "*did 'em almighty brown.*"

CHAPTER XI.

Prepare to depart for Sacramento—stage office and its vehicle—claim to the back seat—mules and their propensities—walk up the mountain—tenacity of Hibernians to privilege, at length overcome—rapid descent of the mountain—Patlanders victimized—advantages of a back seat in a lumber wagon—reach the plain—Mormon Island—Virginia rocker—dreadful catastrophe—dust of the road—Leedsdoff's Rancho—Sacramento City—a city indeed—new settlers—black-legs—mail schooner—musquetoes—beat down the river—land on the bank—settlers from Missouri—ague and musqueto proof—high price of vegetables—best way of aiding the central Americans—passengers in various moods—pilgrims of despair—meet pilgrims of hope—cheer them onward—river settlements in statu quo—arrival at San Francisco—enormous increase of the city—land—sheet-iron store—good success of my friend.

My preparations for departure being completed, my friend and myself proceeded to a place designated as the "Stage office," and secured a passage to Sacramento City, in a vehicle bearing that name; and by paying twenty-five dollars for the journey of fifty miles, we acquired rights to all the comforts and conveniences to the aforesaid vehicle, appertaining and belonging; this was early in the morning of the 28th August—the day opening with a powerful sun, giving us a foretaste of the scorching we were to endure for the rest of the journey.

On reaching the stand we found an open lumber wagon, without springs, or cushions for the seats—and these so ill secured to the sides as to endanger their falling inward, had they not been "dunnaged" with trunks and boxes underneath. This mode of protecting us from casualties of one kind, by depriving the benches of all elasticity, did not fail to expose us to others no less grievous; and in order to secure ourselves from loss of *leather*, we made of our blankets the best cushions we were able, and were soon seated on the middle bench.

While we were thus employed in making our arrangements, and as it seemed a *moot point* where we were about to settle, a couple of Irishmen were coming down the road, hallooing to the driver, and most vociferously forbidding him to suffer their seats to be occupied. "Them back *sates*, you know," said one, "we've paid extra price for." The driver admitted the validity of the contract, and jamming the boxes of the Hibernians' tight beneath the bench, they mounted, and took their *sates* upon the bare and rough boards—not a little satisfied with the position which they occupied.

Two jaded and miserable mules, endued with a double share of mulish pertinacity, were harnessed to the wagon; and the heads of the cattle being in the right direction, the *gad* was laid on, and we set off at a pace which gave promise of a quick passage. But this rapid motion continued no longer than the time occupied in crossing the level ground, and progression was constantly diminishing as we were nearing the foot of the mountain; and when that was attained they came to a dead stand, from which the usual *mode of action* could not move them. After they had endured, what probably was in their opinion, the *ne plus ultra* of castigation, they began to retrograde down the slope.

My friend and myself sprang from the wagon; the two passengers on the forward bench followed our example, and we were on the point of jogging upward, when we were, for the moment, arrested by a colloquy between the driver and the occupants of the back seat.

"I'm thinkin, gentlemen," said the *jarvey*, "that you had better get out and walk up the mountain with the rest on 'em, as it's a chance if these blasted critters will move a step as long as they *see* anybody in the wagon.

"Get out and walk, is it you *mane?*" said the spokesman of the two. "And haven't we paid for ridin'? Divil burn me if ever I heard such impudence!"

"Sure," said the other, "the likes was never seen! Walk up a mountain, an' here is two dirty bastes to draw us! It's meself that won't stir a *fut*."

"Very well, gentlemen," said the driver; "I'll do the best I can;" and accordingly he took the mules by the bridle, and attempted to lead them onward. But the *gentlemen* in harness were not to be outdone by the gentlemen on the back seat, and then the driver proceeded *au voie du fait*, and belabored the recusant quadrupeds unsparingly. The consequence was, that they plunged and backed so furiously, as to force the wagon to the edge of a gully, and had not the vehicle been arrested by a rock, they would have taught the gentlemen on the back *sate* a very expeditious mode of *descent*—far less desirable than that of climbing the steep acclivity before them. The alarm was sufficient; and scrambling out with all possible expedition, with a good many anathemas, they followed our footsteps onward. The mules now satisfied from observation, that the *rationals* were defeated, submitted to be led forward, at a snail's pace, on the journey upward.

We had reached the summit of the mountain, and were seated on the grass resting our limbs, when we were overtaken by the grumbling Patlanders; and in due season, the mules, with their vehicular appendage, arrived, and we resumed our journey.

The crown of the hill was soon passed, and the declivity of the other side was reached; and now, as if determined to make up for lost time, the mules tore down the rapid descent, spurning the rein, at full gallop. Nothing was left to us but to brace ourselves in the best manner we were able, and encounter the abominable jolting as well as we could; and bad enough, in all conscience, it was, but we endured it in silence. Not so the unfortunate Irishmen. Their *seats of honor* excoriated by the rough board, against which their thin galligaskins were no protection; their shins lacerated and bleeding, by coming in constant contact with the sharp edges of the seat in front, they soon became in a pitiable condition, and roared out lustily:

"O, murther! Driver, sthop! let us get out! Blessed Mary! we're kilt intirely!" But vain were their exhortations: the driver had no command over the animals; and if he had had, perhaps he would not have been in a humor to balk his cattle; and onward they drove, at the risk of breaking all our necks, until we reached the plain, where they were perfectly willing to be stopped, that they, as well as the passengers, might gain breath; and the disorder occasioned by repeated concussions was reduced.

While this process was going on, we all alighted, and each man adjusted himself to the best of his ability; the Irishmen holding a doleful confab. "O, Teddy!" said one, "what bloodthy murther! I'm skint alive!"

"Devil a bit am I betther aff!" replied the other: and turning to me, "If we who had the back *sate* are all knocked to *paices* by the *joulting*, sure you must be worser aff than we?"

We admitted that we were horribly mauled, and that seemed to comfort them.

But "the winter of our discontent" was followed by no "glorious summer." Hot enough it certainly was; but the arid plain was like an ash heap, and clouds of dust continued to threaten us with suffocation, until we reached Mormon Island, about half way to Sacramento; where it was necessary to change teams, and increase the number of mules for the rest of the journey. While this was performing, I paid a visit to the diggings, once quite celebrated, but now almost exhausted, and yielding but little profit. Here I first saw in operation the *Virginia rocker;* and it was the best of imported machines which I had ever beheld. It is large and heavy, however, and requires five or six men to work it. The minuteness of the auriferous particles is such, that quicksilver is necessary, in order to collect them.

While making some inquiry in relation to this machine, and to the diggings generally, I was startled by the report of a rifle shot, very near; and seeing several persons rushing towards the spot from whence it proceeded, I followed the train. A most melancholy spectacle was soon before me. It was the bleeding corpse of a young man from the city of New-York, who had taken that method to put an end to disappointed hopes and life together. He had met with various discouragements, from sickness and other causes; and in hopes of finding some better location than the one he had occupied, he left work, and wandered in search of more rich deposits. Unsuccessful in his search, he was seized with despair; and taking his rifle from the tent, unnoticed by his companion, he retired a short distance, and, placing the butt upon the ground and the muzzle of the piece in his mouth, he touched the trigger with his foot, and blew his brains out.

The stage was ready, and all being seated, we trotted off, raising a *cloud*, which accompanied us to Leedsdorff's Rancho. Now, whether the *clouds* which used to envelope the persons of sundry heathen deities in their perigrinations were such *nubiæ* as accompanied us, we know not; but if they were, their godships and goddess-ships must have had "*sneeshin*" gratis, as our sternutative organs were kept in constant action the whole of the journey, which was again renewed, after a change of mules, and continued until our arrival at Sacramento city, about six o'clock in the evening.

What a change had taken place during the few short months of my absence! Sacramento had indeed become a city, and was estimated to contain ten thousand inhabitants. It seemed as if some populous metropolis from the Atlantic States had been dropped, by supernatural agency, upon the banks of the river. The grounds, which were but a short time before tenanted by herds of elk and deer, were covered with buildings, and vocal with the hum of the busy throng of human beings congregated upon them. All was activity and bustle: thousands were constantly arriving, many of whom departed for the mines, and others, for the want of tenements to shelter them, were forced to encamp in the outskirts, dispossessing the wild cattle of their wonted pasturage; and vessels along the shore were used as houses and stores. No trade, calling, or profession was here unrepresented by scores, and the black-legged fraternity, outstripping all others, was legion. The resorts of these were correspondently numerous, and music resounded from the polluted halls. One of these places was called the "*City Diggings*," into which many a poor fellow who had toiled at the mines was attracted by the siren strains, and afterwards eased of his earnings by the practised efforts of sharpers.

We were not annoyed by the rumbling of carts, carriages, and omnibusses, because the soil was soft, and the streets were unpaved; but to counterbalance this relief, the houses were filled with dust, which pervaded the innermost apartments, and the denizens without looked like so many millers or lime-burners, let their cloth or calling be what it might. Lots had risen to enormous prices, from five to fifteen thousand dollars, and there *were* purchasers at even greater prices.

We had much hoped to find a steamer in port, and ready for San Francisco, but for want of better accommodations, we were forced to take passage (a deck passage, with privilege of the hold, was the only option) on board the "Mail Schooner Patuxent," for which we paid fifteen dollars each. The wind was favorable all day, though light; but changing at night, and the channel being too narrow to permit us to beat to windward in the dark, we came to an anchor for the night.

My friend and myself, finding that the musquitoes which boarded us by millions had got possession of the deck, retired to the hold in order to escape them. Here we found every bit of the surface, horizontal or curvilinear, covered by prior occupants; and our only resource was to make our way to the bow of the vessel, and there, each taking a posi tion near the stem, almost upright, where we must have resembled two internal *figure-heads* to the view of the other passengers.

But the musquitoes were not thus to be baffled; they invaded the hold, and kept us in employment, disturbing our uneasy slumbers throughout the night; and right glad were we to hear the tramp of the sailors on deck, as they prepared to weigh the anchor. We continued to turn down the river with a slight wind, and the channel being intricate, and in many places shallow, the Captain ran the vessel alongside of the bank, to await the rising of the tide.

This spot was tenanted by an old man with a son from Missouri, whose occupation was to raise vegetables, and to dispose of them to such customers as the fates should send them—onions at fifty cents a piece, and other articles in proportion. The old man was worn to a shadow, either from the effects of an ague, or the copious phlebotomy of the vampires of musquitoes. The ague, he said, he did not greatly mind, as he had got pretty much used to it in Missouri, and that the musquitoes at first did bite *some*, but that he had got used to that too, though strangers *did say* that they stung almighty sharp. And in good sooth we found it so, and hurried on board the schooner, flapping to the right and left, leaving blood stains upon those parts of our garments where the hand had fallen; and although we slew myriads, they seemed like the progeny of the dragon's teeth of Cadmus, to be renovated thousands for one. If the fens of Nicaragua are peopled by insects as formidable, and in as formidable numbers, God help the Musquito King and his valorous allies, the British; and if they should persist in making war upon us and the Central Americans, the best thing we can do will be to send a colony of the true Sacramento breed of *stingers*, instead of riflemen, to raise the blockade of San Juan.

At flood tide, the Patuxent got under weigh, and stood slowly down the bay. Many of our passengers had just come from the diggings; some with good health and spirits, indicating a successful expedition, others sick, lame, and disconsolate. The first of these said nothing to the disparagement of the country, but the latter could not restrain their feelings of disappointment and disgust. Many cursing the hour when they were induced to abandon profitable pursuits at home, to expose themselves to privations, toils, and dangers, in the expectation of golden harvests which they were not able to gather.

The letter-writers and book-makers who had given such flattering accounts of the climate of California, and the prodigious quantities of gold with the facilities for obtaining it, were most emphatically denounced. But the most thundering anathemas were launched at Governor Mason, whose report to the Government had finished what the delusions of others had begun. There were some among these forlorn adventurers, who were more reasonable, and cast upon *the fates* the odium of their failure. They had had *bad luck*, more was the pity; and that ended their Jeremiads.

We met vessels going up at all hours of the day, crowded with passengers bound for the mines. These were sure to hail us, and inquire what luck? and where were the best diggings? There were some wags on board us who were willing to play upon the credulity of the "green ones;" and assured them the schooner was loaded with the dust. In proof of which, they pointed to numerous bags of grain which lay upon the deck, and which two or three would hold up one end to view, as a specimen of their success. Few on board, they said had less than five hundred thousand dollars worth, and that sum was a fair average of what a digger ought to get in a season.

Hurrahs resounded from the joyful pilgrims! and hats and caps were lustily swung aloft in anticipation of future triumphs, terrifying the wild herds, as they were grazing on the margin of the stream. There might have been a little spice of cruelty in this; but had the report been ever so discouraging, they would still have continued their journey; and as for the *truth*, that would soon disclose itself.

Notwithstanding the enormous growth of Sacramento, the settlements along the river did not give much evidence of prosperity. The one house, at Montezuma, was still solitary; and but two or three had been added to "New York of the Pacific." What progress had been made at Benecia, I could not make out, as we stopped there in the evening, to land the mail, which having done, we continued our passage downward for some part of the night, when it became necessary to cast anchor. With the flood, in the morning, we renewed our course, with the wind a-head, and did not reach a position opposite San Francisco until four o'clock, P. M.

The number of vessels in the bay truly astonished me, and reminded me of the forests of masts in New York. Many of these were abandoned by officers and crews, who had gone *en masse* to the mines. A new humbug had been devised, in order to obtain passengers from the States; and many masters of vessels assured their passengers that they would run their vessels clear up into the diggings, so that they could find board and lodging on board. But the abandonment of their crew perhaps furnished them excuse for not making the attempt to perform their promises.

A small boat came alongside of the schooner, rowed by two well-dressed young men, who had two objects in view—one was to obtain information and counsel in regard to the mines; and the other, to take passengers on shore, at a dollar each, in order to defray expenses. With several others, I stept into the boat; and, in addition to the fare demanded, I gave them all the information in my power, in order to govern their future progress. It had been my hope to have reached San Francisco before the departure of the steamer, that I might transmit letters home, but arriving one day too late, was disappointed.

The climate of San Francisco had not much improved, and I found it necessary for comfort to wear my overcoat on landing, which was no sooner done than I sought out my friend who had shared with me the discomforts of the first night in California. He was no longer a "dweller in tents," but occupied a large and splendid *sheet iron store*, on Sacramento-street, which had been brought round Cape Horn from Boston, together with workmen to set it up, which was done in such good style that it was one of the best tenements of the kind in the city. My friend, I was happy to find, had been successful in business, and had realized what would be considered a handsome fortune in the States. He was kind enough to permit me to spread my blankets under his roof, and I was enabled to pass the night more comfortably than the miserable one which was yet green in the memory of both.

CHAPTER XII.

Arrival at San Francisco—enormous increase—crowded state of the streets—rents enormous—restaurants—Delmonico and Irving Houses—hotels, &c.—Chinamen—and Chinese eating houses—churches—theatres—circus—other amusements—hospitals—Happy Valley—misery of its inhabitants—bad water—and its substitutes—houses of iron covered with zinc—stores and substitutes—storage and wharfage—Californian excitements—failure of the mails—San Joaquin—its tributaries—Stockton—population—reports of Col. Fremont's discoveries—return to San Francisco—early rains—seasons of California—trade winds—aridity of the plains—snow on the mountains—fertility of the valleys—water good tasted—supposed deleterious by the miners—fleas abundant—gold in the quartz—no lime—steam dredging—probable failure—Joint Stock Companies the only safe operations—experience of the Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies—extracting gold from quartz—mines of quicksilver—steamers on the Sacramento—Unicorn seized—mixed population of California controlled by Americans—resolve to return home—engage a passage in the California—obliged to take a deck ticket—meet my friend the Vermonter—fall in with Mr. Marlinspike—another yarn—baked dog and puppy pie—invite the Vermonter to a Kanaka cook shop—won't stand it.

I FOUND San Francisco, like Sacramento, most astonishingly increased; the streets were thronged by passers to and fro, and in some of the narrow thoroughfares it required half an hour to elbow your way the length of a square. Notwithstanding the vast number of houses which had been erected, (some brought from the Atlantic, some from along the coast, and some even from China,) there was not room inside of them to contain their occupants and the merchandise that had been poured into it, and the quantity piled up in the streets was in triple proportion to what it was on my first arrival. New streets had been laid out, houses were constantly being built, and population was spreading in every direction.

I had thought that the price of lots had reached the "ultima thule" of speculation; but they had continued to rise with the advance of every thing else, and were now at Wall-street prices. But extravagant as these were, rents had outstripped them, and had reached to amounts so enormous as will scarcely be deemed credible. A small room for a store, in a building of rough boards, brought from six to eight hundred dollars *a month*, and payable in advance! Many rooms were renting at one thousand and twelve hundred dollars a month; and the Parker House, it was said, was producing one hundred and ninety thousand dollars a year! And a new building, not yet finished, was rented at ten thousand dollars a month, and all in advance.

There had been no falling off among the fraternity of gamblers; on the contrary, they occupied the best houses, and their haunts were increased. The restaurants too, had increased in number and respectability. The Delmonico, and Irving houses, figure conspicuously; and other hotels, such as the New Jersey House, Rhode Island House, New Haven Lunch, Oregon House, St. Louis House, &c. &c., hang out their signs, and all are crowded, as all the population almost board in taverns, whose rates are from ten to twenty dollars a week, and hire lodgings where they find it most convenient.

Some of these lodging houses are constructed like the cabins of vessels, with three tiers of berths on each side, and two rows of three tiers through the centre of the room, and the cost of a *gite* in each, is from one dollar to one and a half each night. Some of the eating-houses were kept by Chinamen. Do not think, reader, that their larders were furnished as at Hong Kong, or Canton, "with rats and mice, and such small deer," or that they would compel you to eat rice with *chop sticks*, or that they would cram you with birds' nests. I had the curiosity to try them, the hazard notwithstanding, and found, to my gratification, that the viands were served up in the true American style, with knives, forks, spoons, and all other accessaries of the table. Their coffee is excellent, and nothing is deficient but their skill in pastry.

How these Chinese got away from the Mandarins at home, and dared to hazard the punishment which awaits them if they should ever revisit the Empire of the Moon's Uncle, I know not; but the drubbings which the celestials have received, have been of some service to the *subjects*, if not to the tenant of the imperial palace of Pekin.

There have not been many buildings erected for public worship. The Baptists and Catholics are the ones most favored in that respect. The former occupy a building erected by C. L. Ross; while the Presbyterians worship in a large tent, similar to those used for circuses and menageries; and the Episcopalians assemble in the dining-room of one of the large hotels.

There is a theatre and a circus, at San Francisco, and *there* the votaries of Thespis are realizing the fondest hopes of the advocates of dramatic performances, in improving the *morals* of the population; and thousands are nightly attracted to these houses of amusement, who, otherwise would be carousing in taverns, or ruining themselves at the gambling houses. Fancy balls, and Ethiopian concerts, were also much encouraged.

The suburbs of the town have extended themselves even to the sand hills, and two hospitals had been erected, where patients were received at a charge of two ounces a day. Such continual crowds were daily arriving, many of whom from want of funds could not proceed to the mines, and consequently, for want of other means of shelter, were compelled to pitch their tents wherever they could find room to spread them. A large concourse of these had assembled in an indentation of the hills, which they had christened the "Happy Valley." Many of them were disposing of their effects either for the purpose of providing for present sustenance, or for farther progress to the mines; and not a few who had been utterly unused to labor, were content to undertake the most painful drudgery in order to replenish their exhausted pockets.

This "Happy Valley" had now become a scene of the most abject misery and distress. Disease was constantly abating the numbers crowded within it; and many, seeing nothing but the dreadful prospect of starvation before them, had shortened their own lives, in despair. The water of San Francisco is not good, and very difficult to be obtained—selling at three cents the pail full; and some who have apprehended danger from imbibing this element, have resorted to beer, wine, and ardent spirits, as substitutes or qualifyers. The natural consequence of which has been, and will be, confirmed habits, which may end in drunkenness. Many have ascribed the virulence of the disease which has ravaged the Happy Valley, to the deleterious effects of the water, and it is quite probable that such is the fact. God help these poor people through the rainy season.

I saw, on California-street, which was just opened, a house, imported from Liverpool, by English merchants, who were here at the first discovery of gold. The frame of this structure was cast iron, with doors, window-frames, and shutters of iron, and the covering of which was zinc. Everything is resorted to as substitutes for stores and warehouses. Vessels at anchor in the bay, were used as such; and the storage, which for bulk equivalent to that of a barrel of flour, was at the rate of three dollars a month, produced enormous revenues. The ship Niantic was dismantled, and drawn high and dry on the beach, where she was securely braced, and a structure, four stories high, was built upon her. The cost of this conversion, I understood, would be fifty thousand dollars—and it promises to be a most profitable investment. Another project has been partially carried into effect—that of constructing a pier or wharf into the bay, in order to facilitate the discharge of cargoes from the shipping, and to enable them to load without expense of lighters. The distance to which they will be compelled to extend the pier is great, and the cost of materials wherewith to construct it, enormous; but it cannot fail of being largely productive to its proprietors;—as for the short distance already completed, the receipts for wharfage amounted to three hundred dollars a day. The price for cartage is in proportion to that of storage, being from one dollar and an half to two dollars a load, or part of one.

The congregation of so many thousands, far from their families and friends, exposed to so many causes of excitement, has given a cast of character to the Californian emigrant, entirely different from his native habits. In order to drown the recollection of far off relations and connections, they are eager in pursuit of whatever engages their attention. Speculations, new and hazardous, are undertaken, and amusements of all kinds are sought, in order to occupy their minds and divert their thoughts from unpleasant reflections. Some are led to the gambling-table, and others resort to the bottle, to dissipate care, and keep down the fiend of melancholy.

The failure of the mails, by some gross mismanagement on the Isthmus, produced the most intense anxiety in a very large proportion of the inhabitants. All knew that the cholera was raging in various parts of the States, and all were eager to receive intelligence of the friends exposed to its ravages; and when the steamer arrived, bringing no mails, the heart-sickening disappointment cast a gloom over every countenance, and caused many to fly to factitious aids, to disperse their uneasiness. Thus it was, that we were tantalized from the 28th June to the 31st October; and the curses heaped upon the managers of the mail steamers were not few, until it was found that the fault lay with the Grenadine government, who then came in for a quadruple share of the anathemas of the sufferers.

As my object was to visit all the principal mining stations, and to satisfy myself in respect to every matter concerning them, this could not be effected without visiting the San Joaquin. Accordingly, after a few days stay at San Francisco, I took passage in a small sailing craft for Stockton; and the events of the tedious voyage of five days will well compare, so far as discomfort is considered, and are very much upon a par, with those which befel me on the Sacramento.

The San Joaquin is neither so large nor so deep as the Sacramento, but is navigable for small steamers of five feet draught of water, for several miles upward. Stockton has been built up during the past season, and presented the usual number of wooden buildings, with due proportions of canvass tenements—the population consisting of the same multifarious order as the other mushroom cities which had sprouted so rapidly, among which the *black-legs* must not be forgotten. The estimate of the number of inhabitants ranged between four and five thousand. It had been the rival of Sacramento City, and at one time a formidable one, as it was the head-quarters through which access was sought to the southern mines, and some of the northern ones; but now it is ascertained that all these can be reached better from Sacramento, and across to some of the southern ones, more easy than by the passage of the San Joaquin. For instance, to the Muckelemnics and Consumnes rivers, where there are very good diggings.

The country along the borders of the San Joaquin resembles that along the Sacramento; the same description of plain and swamp continue, until you get into the region of the mountains. The most produtive of the tributaries of this river is the Stanislaus, on the banks and dry diggings of which more gold in large lumps has been found, than at any other of the placers in California. But notwithstanding, I am decidedly of opinion, that the tributaries of the Sacramento present the fairest field for successful enterprise. The price of living, and of transportation from point to point, are much the same everywhere; and the process of mining and washing on the San Joaquin are the same as upon the different branches of the American River.

In one other respect the advantage is also in favor of the northern diggings. The Indians at the South, from frequent conflicts with the old Spanish settlers, are more warlike, enterprising, and formidable than those at the North. The proportion of foreigners to the American population was greater here than elsewhere. Chilians and Sonoramen abounded; and there had been some difficulties between them and the Americans.

A report was rife at the placers of the San Joaquin, that Colonel Fremont had found a rich mine, and was taking out of it vast quantities of gold. However may be the fact, I saw him on my return to San Francisco, where he had been doing better than in blasting rocks and toiling at the washer, by bringing to a successful issue a suit against the Liedesdorff estate, involving an amount of one hundred thousand dollars.

After a tedious perigrination over the southern mining region, I returned to Stockton, and took passage in a launch for San Francisco, where I arrived on the 15th of October. To my surprise, I found the climate much more mild than it had been earlier in the season, and that contrary to the ordinary season, heavy showers of rain had fallen in the early part of the month, by which some damage was done to the merchandize exposed in the streets, and the thoroughfares of the town exhibited an unusual muddy appearance.

The seasons of California are divided into two, the rainy and the dry season. The first ordinarily begins about the 1st of December, and ends in February or March. The climate along the coast is much ameliorated during the wet months, by the prevalence of the south-eastern trade winds; and were it not for the mud produced by this superabundance of moisture, the weather would be very endurable, as some three out of seven days there is a cessation of rain. During the continuance of the wet months, the country, from the porous nature of the soil, becomes so saturated with water, as to make the roads almost impassable.

At the changing of the *trades*, the wind comes from the north-west, and the rain ceases. And now, along the coast, this wind chills the air, and makes it at times uncomfortably cold; but at some distance from the ocean, the influence of it is unfelt, and the thermometer rises during the day from 70° to 100°, from March to May inclusive; and from June to August, as high as from 90° to 110°. But the heat, from the lightness of the atmosphere, is not so oppressive as at a less degree it is felt in the Atlantic States.

There is a great scarcity of water on the plains, consequently the rapid vegetation of the vernal season soon becomes parched and withered. The grass on the pasturing grounds is soon dried to hay, and upon this cattle and horses feed and thrive. And it is indeed astonishing, with such kind of fodder, and the very little water that they obtain, how these, especially the horses, can endure such fatigue and labor.

While the rain is falling in torrents, drenching the earth on the plains, and inundating the valleys, snows unceasing are increasing the everlasting white caps of the Sierra Nevadas, the influence of which is felt throughout the season in their proximity.

From the long continuance of the dry season, that part of California affected by it can never become valuable for its agricultural products, unless in the valleys, where irrigation can be used. In these all kinds of grain and vegetables can be raised in great perfection. Grapes and pears of very good kinds are also produced. Wheat is grown upon the plains, but the straw is short and the grain indifferent. Timber, where it is most wanted, is very scarce, and difficult to be obtained; but on the mountains, and in the almost inaccessible valleys, it abounds, and is of the finest quality. There is one advantage in the uniformity of the climate, and that is, that there is no need of barometrical instruments, in order to show the indications of the weather; and enterprises can with safety be undertaken during the dry season, without fear of obstruction from the elements. Unlike most countries where such seasons prevail, California, except in the valleys and the rivers along their borders, has no refreshing dews to counterbalance the aridity of the soil; and to that cause may be ascribed the sterility of the plains and mountains.

The water, where it can be had, is sweet and good tasted; but the miners imagine that that of the rivers has some deleterious quality, especially when the water is at a low stage; but most probably, the mineral properties which they ascribe to it are not the cause of the maladies of which they complain, but rather the food which they are compelled to use, with the irregular habits in which they are apt to indulge. If the musquitoes of California are formidable for their numbers and voracity, the same must be said of their fleas, which are everywhere to be found upon the plains, of uncommon size and industry. These are probably scattered, in the first instance, by the various animals who roam the prairies; for these pestiferous little insects are to be found upon all hairy things, from the *squirrel* and the *rabbit* to the *buffalo* and the *bison*.

That gold is abundant in all the quartz formations, and in the streams which flow from their foundations, and which have at former times submerged what are called "dry diggings," is a fact indisputable; but how or where formed, or whether it exists in large beds anywhere, is a question for geologists, and for those better skilled in chemical combinations than myself. That volcanic action has been the means of scattering it abroad, is most highly probable; but the *when* is a subject for some future Cuvier thoroughly to investigate. What struck me forcibly during my rambles was the absence of *lime* formations; and if any such exist, it was not my fortune to behold them.

On my passage downward from Sacramento I met a steam dredging machine, urged upward by a screw propeller, to be used in mining operations. In my opinion, it is hardly possible for such a machine to be used to any advantage, as it can only operate in sandy or muddy soils, and not in the rocky beds of the rivers, where most of the gold is found. It is most probable that the accumulations of alluvion, which the rivers from untold ages have brought down, and placed above the auriferous deposits, are of such extent and depth, that it will require years to remove them; and consequently such modes of digging will be ruinous. The sub-marine armor and the diving-bell are far preferable, and, as experience has proven, have been used to much advantage; but whether they can long be profitable instruments, is very doubtful. My observations upon the San Joaquin have confirmed the convictions of those made upon the northern rivers, that the only sure modes of obtaining adequate reward for labor will be by draining the bars, by diverting the river from its channels.

The profits of this mode have already declared themselves on the Big Bar and the Rocky Bar, and this too under great imperfections in the organization of the companies which have been formed. These were not only joint stock, but *joint labor* associations, and consequently are liable to sudden death, from the constant bickerings which arise in regard to the quantum of labor which is actually performed by the associators respectively; a source of perpetual contention, which cannot fail of fatal effect upon the harmony and continuance of the company. From these and other great obstacles to prosperity, a joint-stock company, discreetly organized and managed, which shall use its funds in the employment of hired workmen, to complete their works, and to assist in mining afterwards, is wholly free. It may be objected, that in the present circumstances, from the scantiness of the population and the high price of labor, this would be difficult, if not impracticable; but it must be remembered that commodities used at the diggings, and necessaries indispensable there, are at corresponding rates, and that these could be furnished by a well managed association, so as to make the *profits* pay the extra price of labor. It is thus with the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies, who have made immense returns to the proprietors, and enriched all who have been engaged in them.

It may be apprehended that from the mixed population now in California, and that hastening thither, that honest laborers cannot be found, and to trust others would lead to certain embezzlement; but these can easily be prevented by proper caution, such as having the washers covered, and the keys to the locks in the possession of proper superintendents. Besides, it would be an easy matter to work these washers by water power, which would decrease the number of hands to be employed, and the consequent danger of felonious abstraction.

There can be but little doubt that the quartz, or gold blossom, contains quantities of gold, which, after the rock is pulverized, can, by means of quicksilver, be separated. Mines of quicksilver are easy of access, and yield abundantly; but that process will not be resorted to, so long as it is easier to collect the dust already separated, and cleanse it in the usual manner. The present price of quicksilver is at ten dollars a pound; but it cannot retain that value after the working of the mines, which is suspended in consequence of some litigation, shall be again resumed.

On my return to San Francisco, I found facilities of ascending the Sacramento greatly increased. A small steamer, built in the Bay, called the Mint, was making regular trips, as was the propeller M'Kim, that came round Cape Horn from New-Orleans, and was purchased by Simmons & Hutchinson. But the best vessel was the steam-ship Senator, which was long given up for lost, but afterwards arrived from the Atlantic, after a passage of seven months. The steamer Unicorn would have been put upon the line by Howland & Aspinwall, but being found to be a British bottom, was seized for breach of the revenue laws. Others were in process of construction for the same destination, and the means of transportation will probably soon be equal to the wants of the emigrants.

The settlement of California by citizens from all parts of the world, and particularly from China and the Indian seas, is destined to cause many changes in the manners of a people hitherto isolated from the rest of the world, and, perhaps ultimately, infringe upon the terrapin policy of Japan itself, as it has done upon that of its neighbor, the Celestial Empire. But the means of access from the Atlantic which are contemplated, some of which will be soon completed, will give a decided American *caste* to the population, and the Saxo-Normans, (I discard the much-abused term of Anglo Saxon) there, as in every other country where they have obtained foothold, will be predominant over all other people.

Having disposed of the effects which I had received by way of the Cape, I determined to pay my friends at home a visit, and resolved to take passage in the California, which was soon expected; but, upon making an application for a passage, my usual luck prevailed, and I was compelled to content myself with a deck ticket, with privilege of spreading my blanket in the hold. While engaged at the office, another pilgrim homeward-bound, made his appearance. This was no other than my friend the Vermonter, who had come over in the Falcon, and was also my fellow-passenger in the Oregon. My friend bore marks of hard service, and was going home for the benefit of his health. His location had been upon the Juba River, and in common with many others, he had suffered from the diseases incident to the country; but, according to his own account, he had not made a bad voyage after all.

As we were returning together we passed a house from which strains of jocund revelry issued, and my companion nothing loath, we entered, in order to have a view of the performers. The thought was a lucky one, for there Jack Marlinspike, in company with two messmates, (not those with whom I had left him at Culloma, who had special good reason for avoiding the bay while the Ohio was in port,) was drinking *upsees* in high glee. This opportunity to have another touch of Jack in his glory, was not to be lost, and we approached the table.

My nautical friend was glad to see me, and recognising my companion, he shook hands with him very cordially, and begged us to be seated. Of course each had to wet his whistle, and this done, my friend began:

"Well now, Mister," says he to the sailor, "I almost begin to believe that story you told me about your cook, for I have been up on the Juba, where I met a good many Kanakas, and sich allfired divers I never see in all my born days."

"Believe it?" said Jack, "that you may. What I tell you is just as true as if the parson had sworn it."

"Wall!" said the other, "that Captain Whalebone ought to be took up, and if I was Jiggeryboo, or Cockeye as you call him, I'd give him some trouble, I warrant you."

"You'd say that stronger, if you knew all," said Jack; "and I'm thinking that it will come to something of the kind, for Cockeye was one of the big-bugs of the island, and it's quite likely, when King Tommyhammer comes to hear of it, he'll declare war against the missionaries."

"How on 'arth?" said the Vermonter, "did he get to be cook aboard a whaler if he was such a great man?"

"Well," says Jack, "this was the way: You see, Cockeye was chief barber to the king's monkeys, and Mrs. Jiggeraboo, his mother, was head washerwoman of the palace, and one night when we were at anchor outside of the reef at Honololu, a red flannel night-cap of the Queen's was missing. Well, there was a devil of a hubbub raised in no time, and the King gave orders that if it wasn't found in fifteen minutes, that Cockeye, who was the widow's only son, should be knocked in the head, according to the law of the country."

"What an ungodly law it is," said the Vermonter.

"So I say," said Jack, "and so thought Cockeye; for, while they were looking about for the night-cap, he slips out into the water and swims off to us. It was my watch on deck, and so as he came alongside, I puts over the bight of a rope and hauls him in. Well, as day broke, up comes the Captain, and as soon as he saw the Kanaka, 'You lubberly son of a sea cow!' says he, 'what are you doing here?' So Cockeye tells the story. 'Into the galley, you whelp of a she whale, and get breakfast in a hurry,' says the Captain, 'or I'll give you a taste of a rope's-end.' Well, you see, while breakfast was getting ready, out comes a double canoe with the King's flag flying, and rows alongside. Now, you see, I thought it was all up with Cockeye, but it was quite a different thing. There was one of the King's fiddlers with a full pardon, seeing as how her majesty's cat had stolen the night-cap, and carried it up to the fifth story, to make a nest of. But what does the bloody Captain? My eyes! if he didn't swear that Cockeye had signed the ship's papers, and he wouldn't give him up; and so he orders the anchor a-weigh, and all sail set, and carries off the Kanaka. So you see it was just as bad as the bloody British used to do, when they pressed our sailors."

"Mister," said the Vermonter, "didn't you say that the Kanaka kept a cook's shop in the settlement? I van, I should like to see him, if I know'd where to find him."

"Easy enough," replied the tar, "he lives on Kanaka Square, next door to the Pope's Consul, at the corner of Gull-lane and Gudgeon-street, where you'll find the very best baked dog, burgoo, and lobscouse, you ever tasted."

"Baked dog!" exclaimed the Vermonter; "Do tell! do people ever eat dogs?"

"Don't they?" replied Jack; "there is nothing better than puppy pie, as you'll find out, if you go to Cockeye's."

While my companion was making horrible grimaces at the thought of canine edibles, I turned to my nautical friend:

"Well, Jack," said I, "how sets the wind with you? I thought you would go back to the mines."

"Why so I did," he replied, "but I longed for the smell of salt water again, and here I am. I mean to bowse it about here for a spell, and then take a look once more at blue water."

Bidding him good-bye, and fair weather, and receiving a reciprocation of my good wishes, we shook hands and parted.

When fairly in the street—"What say you to a dinner at Cockeye's?" I asked of the Vermonter.

"Darn me!" said he, "if ever I go to a shop where they dish up dogs!"

"Well," said I, "every man to his notion;" and we parted.

CHAPTER XIII.

Crowd homeward bound—pilgrims in various moods—get on board the California—pass the golden gates—hard bed on deck—excellent captain—humanity to the sick—Monterey—Government removed to San José—rain—San Deigo—receive coal—transmogrification of passengers—complaint of hard fare—bean soup—sea pie—vermicilli—vinegar and vegetables—difficult to procure medicines and surgical advice—Mazatlan—cholera—again at sea—burial of one of the passengers—arrive at San Blas—disappointed of a landing—Acapulco—its former glory—Lord Anson and the Manilla Galleons—land—Mexican restaurant—walk on shore—resume our passage—knock down and drag out on board—specimens of Kanaka nobility—approach the Isthmus—premonitory showers—anchor in the bay—long passage—complaints thereof—Bungos and Bungomen—land at Panama.

The 1st of November was approaching, and it was necessary to make provision for my voyage. For the scanty accommodations which I could procure, I was obliged to pay one hundred and fifty dollars, and therefore it behoved me to make the best preparation for what was likely to follow. Our hour of sailing was at twelve meridian, but the Panama having arrived during the day, the Commodore detained the California until he could receive and answer such letters as the mail had brought—a privilege accorded to none others; and therefore, myself with others, were obliged to depart without the satisfaction of hearing from our friends at home.

None who had come over the mountains, or around the Cape, were again willing to encounter the perils and privations of the voyage, by either route; and all availed themselves of this opportunity to reach the Atlantic by the shorter route by the Isthmus at whatever cost. Many of the pilgrims designed to return at some future period, and try again their fortunes in the gold regions; and others devoutly thankful for being permitted to turn their backs upon them, vowed never again to tempt providence by a second visit; such was the different feelings of those who *had*, and those who had not been successful.

It was necessary to be on board the packet; and preliminary to this, it was *necessary* to hire a passage to her, which, at the cost of three dollars each, was effected; and once more I was *afloat*, on my homeward journey, impatient of delay, but obliged to submit to it for some hours, for causes before mentioned. But at ten o'clock at night, we got up our anchor, and by dawn on the 2d November, we were past the "golden gates," and fairly upon the ocean. There is a tradition among the Indians, that the Bay of San Francisco was once an inland sea, and that it was separated from the ocean by a narrow neck of land, which has since disappeared. This is probably as true as the legendary tales of the aborigines of the Atlantic; and He alone, who caused the revolutions which have happened, can determine their verity.

The morning was foggy, damp and cold, and the night had been none of the pleasantest. Still I had preferred to spread my blanket on deck, to being stowed two in a berth below. I had been so long exposed to the elements on shore, by sleeping on the ground and in the open air, that the atmosphere of the crowded steerage was not endurable, and I determined to maintain my "digger" habits, until my arrival at the Isthmus. The plank of the deck, therefore, was my feather bed; and if there were any of these less indurate than the others, I was not fortunate enough to find them, for a tomb-stone in a church yard could not have been less comfortable. But the weather grew warmer as we approached the line, and I found means to reconcile myself to my hard quarters.

One thing contributed much to render more endurable a sea voyage on board a crowded vessel, and that was the humane and considerate conduct of the Captain of the California, to which the many who had contracted diseases at the mines were indebted for various comforts, and all were willing to pronounce him a *gentleman*, and well qualified for the station he occupied, and very unlike his compeer of the Oregon. Towards evening we ran into Monterey, exchanging mails, and landing some passengers. We had now a view of the town, which, owing to our stopping there at night on our upward passage, I had not before seen, and it seemed to me to be a much pleasanter place of abode than San Francisco. There were several small vessels at anchor in the harbor, which is not a good one.

Monterey was formerly the seat of Government of California; but the archives have been removed to San José, about seventy miles south of San Francisco, and about fifteen miles from the west side of the bay. Since this place has become the capital, there has been much speculation in lots. But according to Bayard Taylor's history of the titles to property there, the purchasers are exposed to some hazards. We had no opportunity to land at Monterey, as the anchor was not cast; and as soon as our mails were taken, and the passengers landed, we left the bay and paddled onward.

The next day was rainy, and doomed all on deck to a drenching. This to us, who had so long been in the dry region, and had contracted a kind of *hydrophobia*, was far from agreeable; but as I well knew we were to have a superabundance of moisture on our arrival at the Isthmus, a small deluge now and then on the passage might be salutary premonitions.

A little after dark, we ran into the bay of San Diego, (that place of *grass widows*, which we had fought shy of on our upward passage;) and as we were about to cast anchor, we were brought up on the *middle ground*, which saved the necessity of that operation, as we were fast, until the tide rose. An English brig, with coal, just from Liverpool, was hauled alongside of us, in order to supply the steamer with fuel. This was discharged into the forward hatchway, near the entrance of the forward saloon, where the passengers were stowed away as thick as "rabbits in a warren." There was a draught of air through this *sleeping place*, which carried the fine particles of the coal into every berth, and into the mouths of many of the *snorers;* and in the morning, when they made their appearance on deck, they were received with a universal shout of laughter. This was for some time inexplicable to them; but as each looked at his fellow, the cause was easily found; for their faces, hands, and habiliments had all assumed the sablest of hues, and the whole bore strong resemblance to a congregation of chimney sweepers, fresh from their sooty avocations.

Water was most vociferously called for; but none *fresh* was given them, and the effect of ablution with that of the ocean was to *set the dye*, and they all found themselves fit to enact *Jim Crow* or the *Ethiopian Serenaders* without the aid of "*burnt cork*." Some swore worse than my uncle Toby's armies in Flanders; others, with not very good grace, joined in the laugh; and of the two, whose the better part? And many who had jeered us about the comforts of our dormitory on deck were less disposed to chuckle at their imaginary advantages. We were detained twenty-four hours at San Diego, during which time no intercourse with the shore was permitted. Whether the captain was afraid of the *widows*, I do not know.

There was great complaint among the passengers forward of the fare which was given them, and with very great reason. The substitute for *bread* was as ponderous and as tasteless as an *adoba;* the half-boiled rice was burned; but the cook probably considered that the *dough* and the *rice* would make a fair average. The bean soup was of that consistency which one might suppose a handful of beans to a pailful of water might be concocted to; and a mighty skilful *fisher* was he who could shovel up a bean from the gruel which was served up to him.

But if everything else was nought, there was one dish which was served up to us on Sundays, which the cook of the California, the most unique of "kitcheners," did make in its greatest perfection, and that was a "*sea pie*." Of what this precious *plat* was compounded, heaven and the cook knows; perhaps it was of that material so much lauded by Mr. Marlinspike; but it was swallowed by the California pilgrims with as much *gusto* as the frequenters of Delmonico's could possibly discuss their *patés de foie gras;* and perhaps some of those scientific *gourmands* would do well to take a trip to California, in order to improve their skill in gastronomy.

For myself, anticipating the thinness of the potables of the forward cabin, I had provided myself with store of liquids, (as well as something more substantial,) among which were some dozens of London porter, a beverage at sea fully equivalent to the Olympian nectar with which the Celestials of old used to fuddle themselves. There was an abortive attempt to vary our bean broth with *vermicelli*, which to the uninitiated seemed to be broth of *worms;* but as none of these animals, with which our biscuit abounded, seemed to have been abstracted, it could not safely be said that it was concocted of these.

The greatest grievance to those so long pent up at the placers was the lack of vinegar, and, next to that, of vegetables, from which they had been so long deprived. To the legion of complaints made upon sundry accounts the captain listened with patience, and directed the cook and stewards to rectify the abuses; but as some of these were working their passage to Panama, with the intention of leaving the ship there, they paid little attention to instructions in that respect.

It was at all times difficult, and at many times impossible, to procure medicines from the medicine chests, which I always thought were required by the law to be amply stored on board passage vessels, and ready to be administered to the crew and passengers, as their necessities required. The surgeon of the ship held himself almost as inaccessible as his curatives, and was not without difficulty prevailed upon to administer advice to many sufferers who required it; and not then without a heavy fee, to which I do not believe that he was entitled.

The weather continued to grow milder as we proceeded south, and we soon passed Cape San Lucas, at the mouth of the gulf, and shaped our course for Mazatlan, where it was intended to make a landing; and all on board anticipated much satisfaction from a range ashore. But when arrived off the town, it was ascertained that the cholera was rife; and the captain very prudently interdicted intercourse with the shore. All were well content with this resolution; and determining to make up for our disappointment on our arrival at San Blas, were quiescent under a detention at anchor, in full sight of the town, for twenty-four hours.

The harbor of Mazatlan is insecure; and a short time before our arrival, a French vessel was dashed upon a rock in front of the town, when many on board perished. As we had again resumed our passage, we had a melancholy duty to perform for one of our passengers, who, I understood, was from Maine. He had come on board very ill, and after much suffering, had died on leaving Mazatlan. According to nautical custom, his remains were sewed up in canvass, with sufficient weight at the feet to carry the corpse to the bottom; and after the burial service of the Episcopal Church was read over it, it was slid from the plank at the gangway into its fathomless grave.

We had been quite sure of a landing at San Blas, as we expected to take in coal at that port. But on our arrival there, none was to be had, and a landing was not vouchsafed to us. We were detained here nearly all day, in changing mails and transacting other business, with the Spanish authorities, who are proverbially slow in their movements. Here a considerable quantity of specie was smuggled on board, much to the detriment of the Mexican revenues, as that government was choused out of its export duty; but whether the custom-house officials were *sufferers* on the occasion, the legend nothing saith.

We now shaped our course for Acapulco, and the beautiful vegetation which the range of coast exhibited, was exceedingly refreshing to the eyes of all who had left the arid plains of California. In the morning we came to anchor in that beautiful and secure harbor, (near to a fine beach of white sand, and under the guns of a formidable battery,) so celebrated in the palmy days of the Spanish monarchy. Here the Galleons from the Chinese coast and from the Philippine Islands, used to deposit their treasures, from whence they were transported across to the Mexican Gulf. None who have ever read the histories of the wars of that period, and particularly the narrative of the disastrous expedition of Lord Anson, together with the description of the capture of a Manilla ship, by the Centurion (the only ship of a formidable fleet which ever returned to England), but must have a vivid recollection of Acapulco, now shorn of its glories, and which, during our war with Mexico, a single vessel of our navy insulted, and held in blockade. The town was visible from the anchorage, and all were agog to go on shore to visit the Hidalgoes and the Donnas, and taste the luxury of a Spanish breakfast, as it was the hour of the morning meal.

Means of debarkation were not wanting, as the usual number of Spanish shore crafts were soon along side, and the ship was soon deserted for a ramble upon *terra firma*. We left the cooks of the California to luxuriate in their own decoctions, for the better chance of a regale at a cabarito. While hundreds were strolling through the streets and markets, crowding their pockets and their stomachs with fruit, and other matters, myself, with several others, made our way to a Mexican restaurant, and ordered such a repast as the house could furnish. Aware of the incursion of the *hungrys* who were to follow us, we took our seats at the table in order to secure preemptive rights, and patiently to await the motions of the copper-colored señoras and señoritas, who were to be our Hebes of the chocolate and coffee, to be forthcoming.

Before we were served, the van guard appeared, and the main body soon following—the house was taken by storm. Never before did Mexico witness *such* an invasion. All kinds of "chicken fixins" (being every thing edible from beef to *baccalao*) were vociferously demanded, and many stormed because their orders were not forthwith executed, although the poor Mexican understood not what they meant. "Come, Don Slow-and-easy," said one; "fetch on your 'chicken fixins.'" "Si señor," would be replied. "Be pretty —— quick about it," another would roar. "Señor si," with a shrug, would be returned. Still si señor and señor si were lavishly enunciated to every order, as they proceeded to get such viands as their larder afforded. All kinds of dialects were vociferated inside; the confusion of tongues was alone equalled by the squalling of the poultry without, which perished by hecatombs, in order to appease the cravings of the famished "Americanos;" and the uproar of that day might have furnished a theme for a Mexican epic.

After a moderate repast I visited the Fort, and such other places as were worthy of note, and enjoyed a delightful stroll in the country, where the vegetation was very luxuriant; and among palms, cocoa nut, orange and lemon trees, and plantains, and bananas, I could feast my eyes, and occasionally my mouth, with their luscious products. At evening, our watering was completed, and five head of sleek-looking cattle were shipped—when the signal for sailing was given, and we hurried on board. All were gratified at the sight of our bovine passengers, and steaks and stews, with good beef soups, entered our imaginations, as to take place of *wishy washy* bean broths, and substitutes for porridge.

We were quietly pursuing our way from Acapulco, without anything worthy of note to attract, or to distract attention, until one Sunday morning the ship was in an uproar, in consequence of a furious noise on the spar deck, and the sudden rush of passengers towards the quarter from whence it proceeded. I happened to be on the hurricane deck, and looking down, I discovered that the din proceeded from two men in furious combat, thumping, gouging, and biting, in a style sufficient to satisfy the greatest *glutton* of the pugilistic fraternity. Soon others joined, and in a short time a *battle royal* between a dozen or more began—and soon displaced eyes, and dismembered fingers and noses, with streams of blood upon the deck, gave evidence of the ferocity of the combatants. The captain, however, with a sufficient force, soon entered the arena—not as gladiator, but pacificator *par force*, and soon put an end to the "*knock down and drag out*,"—separating the belligerents, and leaving to the friends of the parties to collect and carry off such trophies (eyes, noses, and fingers,) as respectively belonged to them, and to adjust their tattered clothes as best they could.

This horribly disgusting scene, the first of the kind which I had ever witnessed, began between one of the *Bowery B'hoys* and a Missourian or Kentuckian, about which was the *better horse;* and the combatants had drawn into the vortex their respective friends and adherents. In a regular "*stand-up;*" the graduates of the Empire club would probably have had the best of it, but in the "*rough and tumble*," which had occurred, the other party carried away the palm, and more returned noseless and eyeless to the Bowery than crossed the Missouri or the Ohio. Neither party, however, was satisfied; and it was determined to have the matter decided in another rencounter, on our arrival at Panama.

We had among our passengers two distinguished personages, the sons of the King of the Sandwich Islands, under the escort of Mr. Judd, who had been a kind of counsellor of the king. They were tall, well-formed youths, and spoke English well. It was their intention, after having seen a little of our country, to visit that of Queen Victoria, and the states of Europe; and the copper colored nobility of the Kanakas were certainly very creditable specimens of humanity.

We were all anxious to reach Panama; and by the reckoning of the ship, we were fast approaching it. But other indicia presented themselves, which announced our contiguity to land, and, at the same time, afforded us a foretaste of what awaited us at the Isthmus. Hot, sultry weather, with violent and sudden showers, would in an instant fall in deluges upon our decks, and drive us to seek such shelter as we could find; each man gathering himself and his drenched blankets, which, after the torrent had ceased, he was compelled to wring, that they might the next day be sufficiently dried to serve for a portion of the coming night, when the same scene was to be renewed, with variations. This happened for several successive nights, until we made the land, and cast anchor in the bay of Panama, about two miles from the shore, on the 22d November.

Our passage had been long and tedious; but very little steam had been kept up, the proprietors being willing to economize in fuel, if the rations to the passengers did cost the more. But the *comfortable* fare, even if it had been really as good as it was to have been, was slender compensation for the delays to which we were subjected; and not few were the anathemas, on account of the sluggish motion of the steamer. It would be an easy matter, if the firing and watering were properly arranged, to make the passage in twelve days, if no stops were made.

Permits to land were now obtained, and all was bustle and hurry to get our effects into the bungos, which were alongside; but it took time to make the necessary arrangements with the lightermen; and when a bargain was once made, it was a great chance that, while you were gathering your luggage, another customer might not step in, and fill the boat before you. But little faith can be placed in a Panama bungoman; and it must be admitted that the "point of honor" had become so obtunded among the California pilgrims, that no scruple was made in encouraging the Panama men to violate contracts. At one o'clock, P.M., I once more set foot on the shores of the Isthmus, glad of having thus far escaped dangers which had been fatal to many, and dreading those in prospect, which we were sure to encounter at this season of the year.

CHAPTER XIV.

Panama in the olden time—new settlers—American Hotel—agents in quest of passengers—route by Cruces the only practicable one—provision of good brandy—leave Panama—drenched to the skin—try the brandy—hoaxed—molasses and water—wrathful thereat—horrible condition of the road—dangerous passes—miry sloughs—torrents and gullies—reach a stopping place—choice of lodging—a dry hide—its tenants—slow travelling—leave the mules and go on foot—reach Cruces—American Hotel—succinct account of Cruces—meet many Americans—American Consul to the Pacific—his lady—French ladies—the best mode of transporting the fair sex—train of specie—negro guard—surprised and taken—learned that the dreadful fight which was to have come off at Panama was postponed.

PANAMA, in the days of Drake and Dampier, was a place of some notoriety, and often suffered from the incursions of buccaneers, at a later period. One of these, in 1670, sacked the place, and laid the city under heavy contributions.

The city had undergone but little change in appearance, but a sprinkling of American population was perceptible, and various trades and occupations were carried on by the north-eastern emigrants. Hotels, of course, were prominent; for when two or three Yankees are met together, there is sure to be one tavern-keeper among them. I stopped at one of these, called the American Hotel, no very favorable specimen of many of those so designated at home; but the landlord laid the fault of want of accommodation to the peculiar throng of travellers which then overran the Isthmus.

Intelligence had been received that the Crescent City was at Chagres, and that the Falcon and Alabama were soon expected. There was a reasonable prospect, therefore, that we should find no difficulty in securing passages, when once over the Isthmus. To give assurance of this, and, at the same time, a favorable augury of better accommodation than had been vouchsafed to us on our outward passage, agents of all these vessels were busily engaged in securing passengers in their respective ships; and none doubted that if once upon their decks, their chance of seeing home again would be favorable indeed. The fearful passage was to be made, at all times to be dreaded; but now that the rainy season had set in in earnest, our apprehensions were increased. The chapter of accidents was rather voluminous, and the chance of being swept away by torrents, or of being suffocated in the mire, were added to the list of casualties. Had there been trustworthy life assurances at Panama, I do not doubt that many ounces of dust would have been expended in premiums; but such not being the fact, each man prepared for the transit at his own hazard.

The route by Gorgona was impassable—that by the way of Cruces, therefore, was the only one left to our choice; and, as matters in relation to our progress that way could not be made *worse*, I resolved to wait a couple of days in Panama, to make my preparations at leisure. The goodly inhabitants of this renowned city still kept up their favorite *Sunday* amusements at the cock-pit, the circus, and the gaming-tables, and the reverend padres, after the religious exercises of the day were ended, were not at all unwilling to engage in all the games of hazard customary at such places.

We found several hundred Americans at Panama, waiting for passages; and many, having become impatient, had taken berths aboard various sailing craft bound upwards. These will, probably, realize the truth of the old adage, "the more haste the worse speed," as those who chose to wait the return of the Panama or the Oregon, will arrive many weeks before them; and they run great risk beside, of being, in consequence of protracted passages, run short of provisions and water, as many vessels had been an hundred days, (and some more,) on the way, and few less than seventy days.

Sure of being wet to the skin from the commencement to the conclusion of our journey, I thought a little good brandy a very necessary article in my *medicine chest;* and, therefore, in my arrangement I resolved that it should not be omitted. Accordingly I set about a quest for the *very best.* A sign-board caught my eye, on which was a name most indisputably Yankee, announcing "shaving done here;" "boots and pistols cleaned;" "also liquors of the choicest kind, by the bottle or glass." Here, then, said I, is the place; and I entered the domicile of the shaver:

"I want," said I, "a bottle of your brandy, if it is good, but it must be really good or it will not answer."

"Let me alone for that," was the reply. "We," he added, with a familiar nod, which claimed me as a countrymen, "know the real Simon pure; and here is a batch which I don't sell to strangers."

A bottle well corked, and covered with foil over the mouth and neck, was handed me; and the price, (a dollar and a quarter,) being thrown upon the counter, I went home to stow away my purchase.

Our next step was to select mules for the journey, which were obtained at twenty-one dollars each, and a requisite number of peons to carry our luggage, which being properly secured upon the backs of the carriers, on the morning of the 24th November we mounted our mules, and followed our packmen on the road to Cruces, leaving the streets of Panama crowded to excess with people in the same predicament with ourselves, preparing to get onward.

There was a great difference in *bulk* of the loads eastward, compared with those which I had seen transported on my journey over, but although it presented a diminished appearance, it had not perhaps decreased in value; at least the proprietors of it were quite anxious for its safety, and very prudently kept an eye upon the peons who carried it.

The weather, during our stay in the city, had been constantly *drizzly,* with occasional hard showers, and the skies on the day of our departure did not seem more auspicious. Black masses of clouds would suddenly form, and whirl through the air portentously, as if they could not choose but discharge by pailfuls. Nor did they disappoint us. Deluge succeeded to deluge, which drenched us to the skin the first hour of our journey. The sultriness of the weather was intense; and although we were well moistened externally, after a few miles journey we found it necessary to imbibe some liquid in order to quench our thirst.

Being rather suspicious of the quality of the water, of which plenty was found on the way, we deemed it prudent to qualify it with a little of the excellent brandy which I had so carefully placed in my havresack. It was soon forthcoming, the cork extracted, and filling out a measure, I handed it to my companion, who speedily bolted it, and swallowed afterwards a quantity of the element from the brook. I followed his example, but instead of the real *Otard,* or *Seignette,* I found my mouth full of a very questionable liquid, which bore a greater resemblance to that delicious beverage of the Yankees y'clept *switchel,* than to any thing else.

"Why, what the devil's this!" I exclaimed; "the rascal has cheated us, and given us molasses and water instead of brandy."

"That is precisely my opinion," said my friend; "and the shaver deserves to be Lynched for the swindle."

"At least," said I, "if he was within reach I would serve him as the crusty Don, in the play, served Lampedo, the apothecary, by making him swallow at a dose the whole of his rascally beverage. But farewell to our hopes of comfort; and farewell to *the best of brandy*," I added, as I pitched the bottle into the stream, and left it to find its way to the ocean.

The condition of the road to Cruces passes all description. It had, in many places, once been paved, but the rush of water had destroyed the pavement, and the animals would frequently get their fore-feet so fast into the tenacious clay at the bottom that it was with great difficulty they could extricate them; and beast and rider would be thrown down, where, after floundering for sometime, they might think themselves happy if they regained the firm ground, covered with mud from head to foot.

Sometimes the road would wind round narrow passes, with deep precipices on one side, and then every thing depended upon the sure-footedness of the mules, and there was much danger that they might lose their wonted caution, and precipitate themselves and their riders into the unfathomable abyss below. Those which were unshod, and whose hoofs were tender, were much exposed to such catastrophies. It not unfrequently happened, in some of these passes, that the action of the water, and the continuous tread of the horses and mules, had worn the centre of the rocky track so deep as to create a wall on each side. In many places these gullies were so narrow as to compel the rider to extricate his feet from the stirrups and throw them forward, to escape excoriation of his limbs by the craggy rocks on either side. Often were we obliged to pass through such places, while the gully was a raging torrent belly deep to the mules, and then the wary animals would plant one foot, and when satisfied that it was safe, would as cautiously seek a firm spot for the others, that no unfortunate mis-step might plunge them into the rapid water, and hurry them over the ledges.

Meanwhile the skies were continually discharging their constant accumulations upon us, and it seemed like the bursting of water spouts rather than the hardest of showers. During these furious descents, the flood was so great in many places, that it was unsafe to stem it until the water should subside, which caused much detention, and disappointed us of our expectation of reaching Cruces that night, as there were yet many dangerous passes to encounter. In one, after mounting an eminence, through a path which seemed like stairs chiselled in the rock, we were obliged to descend similar steps on the other side. Here the mules would brace their feet forward, and slide down on their haunches—and it required no little skill to keep the saddle in such emergencies.

At length, at night-fall, we reached a couple of negro huts, constructed of bamboo, where were congregated about seventy-five of the van-guard of the party, and here it was necessary to halt for the night. The houses were crowded to overflowing, and the *best bed chamber*, the only one, having been assigned to a man, who, with his wife and two children, had been our fellow-passengers in the California. The choice which was left for the rest was the clay floor of the tenement (now become wet and muddy, from the dripping of the soaked travellers), or the unsophisticated soil without; and I had made up my mind to an *outside berth*, when I chanced to descry a dry hide hanging over my head. This I incontinently appropriated; and after swallowing one cup of the decoction of *burnt corn*, which the sooty hostess dignified with the name of coffee, satisfied that one was a *dose*, with some elbowing I made shift to spread my prize upon the floor, and calling my friend to my side, we stretched ourselves in our wet clothes, and tried to sleep.

But alas! in my appropriation of the hide aforesaid, I had made *forcible entry* into the domicile of a colony of red ants, and they proceeded to their usual process of ejectment, and my friend and myself were most excellently well stung by the venomous little insects. Still it was better to endure the pain than give up possession, and we made the best of it until morning, when the time of reckoning arrived, and that of our departure approached. Our ebony landlady resolved that none should escape *scot free*, and therefore had taken the pay for our supper as it was handed to us—but there was yet the lodging to be collected, and now she made us pay scot and *lot* too—for while others escaped with the payment of four reals (four shillings), our price was *dos pesos* (two dollars) for the use of the hide and the services of the denizens, to which was added, the comfortable smoke of the kitchen, by which we were almost suffocated, and which, had musquitoes been in question, might have been serviceable—but as it was, it made no impression upon the ants which were devouring us. The *lawing* paid, we went our way.

After a couple of hours hard (though slow) riding, we stopped at another tent, and procured a drench of miserable chocolate for breakfast, and then resumed our journey; this was becoming slower and slower, as our exhausted mules could scarcely draw one foot after the other; and being weary of exercising legs and arms in the vain effort to accelerate their progress, when we had approached within six miles of Cruces, we gave up the attempt in despair, and dismounting, and giving our weary animals in charge to the muleteer, we pushed onward through the mire, to Cruces, where, spent with heat and toil, we at length arrived, some time after noon.

The sign of the American hotel met our eyes, and consequently our steps were bent thitherward. It was kept by a German, whose cook was from Ireland, and who, among other accomplishments had acquired the art of making good coffee. While we commenced inroads upon the edibles, we ordered a sufficient quantity of the aromatic fluid, wherewith to wash it down, and to give zest to our cigaros after the cloth was removed, and our joy was exceeding great, that we had reached Cruces in safety. Our next care was to secure comfortable lodgings, and the hotel could afford us none. These, though scarcely comfortable, and only so by comparison, were found at the house of a native who strewed some mats upon the floor, upon which we spread our blankets, and turned in. Our rest was undisturbed throughout the night, and we were well content to pay half a dollar each for our accommodation. There is another house called the French Hotel, but both are sorry houses, built of adobas and bamboo, and covered with palm leaves, with clay floors, and with a single room for all purposes.

Cruces is something larger than Gorgona, and like that place has a jail and a church, both of the same materials, as our self-styled hotels. I saw a brass cannon at Cruces—it was an old Spanish gun, and probably a relic of the times of the Buccaneers. There were several old bells lying on the ground, in the neighborhood of the church, and sounds were produced by thumping with a hammer. This seemed to be the office of an antiquated negro, whom I saw engaged in chiming for vespers. The English merchants have here, as well as at Chagres, a strong house of stone, for the security of their specie from Panama.

We met many Americans, who had come out in the last steamers, and learned that there were eleven hundred at Chagres and on the way over, all impatient to reach the gold region. Some had been provident enough to procure tickets for the mail steamers, but by far the greater number were not so fortunate; and probably many were doomed to long detention, exposed to diseases incident to the climate. These may be in a great measure avoided, by discretion in diet, and by avoiding exposure to the night air. But over fatigue is dangerous, and dissipation generally produces the same effect that it does in all sickly countries. The reader will have perceived, that the route either by Cruces or Gorgona is beset with difficulties and dangers. In the dry season, that by Gorgona is far preferable; but whoever travels across the Isthmus ought to secure the best mule; and see that it is well shod, without reference to the extra price which may be demanded; *these*, their obstinacy notwithstanding, from their being sure-footed, are preferable to horses. There were several sick persons brought over in hammocks by the Peons—a mode of travelling sometimes used in Yucatan, by persons not thus afflicted.

A consul of our Government for one of the Pacific ports, with his wife and child, had just arrived in Cruces. Another American gentleman and lady, together with several French gentlemen and ladies, were also on the way over. The American cortége started first; the ladies attired in men's clothes, and very pretty looking boys they made. Unconscious of the nature of the ride before them, they gaily mounted their mules *á Califourchon*, and trotted off. Alas for their trim and sleek costume! and alas for the delicate limbs and tender frames of the fair riders who were to encounter the painful journey to Panama.

The French party started next day, the ladies dressed *mi parti casacque, et jupon*, and on side-saddles. My sympathies for them were also strongly excited; and I doubt not that they bitterly repented that they were not altogether *en cavalier*, in imitation of my fair countrywomen. I could not get over these sympathies, during my stay at Cruces; and whenever I reflect upon the deluging, the pounding, and bespattering that they were destined to meet with, I felt heart-sick at the thought. Now, were I ever to be so unfortunate—(which, heaven grant I may never be)—so unfortunate, I say, as to be obliged to take a woman across the Isthmus of Panama, I would most assuredly employ peons to carry her in a hammock or litter, or strapped to one of their baggage frames, like a precious bale of merchandise, rather than to permit her to be exposed to the casualties and discomforts of the ordinary mode of travelling. These biped carriers walk erect, are strong and sure-footed, scarcely ever making a false step; and they are positively the fittest animals for a fair lady to *back*, of any employed on the Isthmus.

While at Cruces, we were overtaken by a train which the agent of the English steamer from Callao (which had arrived at Panama at the time we did) had sent over with specie. This *strong* escort consisted of two negroes, with flint-lock muskets (perhaps not charged), and neither the men or the arms seemed fit for service. Some of our passengers, being in the humor for a frolic, made up to the guard with long strides and fierce aspects; and as they all carried knives and pistols in their belts, they presented a formidable appearance. The guard made no effort at resistance, but surrendered their arms at the first demand, crying for mercy most vociferously; and they were not a little relieved, when, after enjoying their terror for some minutes, the party with a hearty laugh restored the guns, and permitted them to proceed. From one of the passengers who came out the day after us, I learned that the bloody fray which had been postponed to the day of our departure, had not been fought; both parties, in their eagerness to get to the Atlantic, being willing to adjourn it *sine die*.

CHAPTER XV.

Leave Cruces—passage down—the negroes and the monkeys—learn Spanish by way of passe temps—teach the niggers English—Gorgona—meet an old acquaintance—passage down—meet fleets going up—questions and answers—jerked beef and aquadiente—Chagres—the Falcon—leave my companion—and Chagres—great difference of accommodation—good fare—arrival at Havana—Sunday opera—visit to the town—Ohio arrives—get on board—leave taking—magnificent vessel—excellent Captain—contrast of the Pacific steamers—Cape Hatteras—sea-sickness—cold weather—coast in sight—land—valedictory—advice.

On the morning of the 27th November, having a little refreshed ourselves at Cruces, and made the necessary preparations for our passage down the river, myself with two companions having, among those preparations, chartered a comfortable canoe, manned by four "hombres," three at the paddles and one at the helm, took our departure for Chagres. The current of the river is at a rate of between four and five miles the hour; and our boatmen, who felt disposed to reserve their vigor until the return passage, when all would be required to stem the stream, did not put forth much force to the paddles, but would lazily dip along, adding but little velocity to our motion. Although we were sure of reaching Chagres at evening, yet the confinement on board so small a craft, together with the natural inclination of all wayfarers to "go-ahead," we were induced by various modes to endeavor to impart more power to their elbows, that we might be the quicker at our journey's end; but, although in words they seemed to assent to the proposition, in deed they were very inactive, and we were *par force* passive under the delay.

The day was cloudy, with but little rain, but oppressively hot; and we endeavored to amuse ourselves with gazing at the luxuriant foliage, and the various animated objects about us; among the latter of which, the monkeys were the most amusing, chattering and grinning at us, as if they recognised old acquaintances, though that could scarcely have been possible, as a Californian pilgrim going *out* is quite a different object in appearance from one of that class returning. Tiring of this, we began to barter with the boatmen for some words of "nigger" Spanish, in exchange for such of our vernacular as we deemed equivalent; but which had the best of the bargain, it would be difficult to decide. For, if we were amused by the queer sound of our own dialect issuing from peon mouths, from the "flashing of ivory" and vociferous laughter of the Ebonies, when we began to "air our new vocabulary," it became quite questionable whether the *agio* had not been in their favor.

The distance from Cruces to Gorgona is, according to Spanish computation, three leagues, about eight miles English, and it was not long before we reached the latter place. On my passage over in the Falcon, I had become acquainted with a Mr. Miller, a fat old gentleman, who, with his son and an enormous outfit of Chatham-street *indispensables*, and *ne plus ultra* perfect gold-washers, had reached Gorgona, and was "biding his time" to reach the gold regions. My friend could, without stuffing, have sat for the picture of Will Waddle, or the "two fat single gentlemen rolled into one," of Colman's admirable broad grin. His son was a smart, intelligent, and well educated lad; and among the luggage of the family, were good store of the classics, wherewith to *improve the mind*, and amuse *the lonely hours* of the digger at the placers. And to these were added an assortment of trinkets for the Indian market, which at by-spells might be disposed of at a profit. How far the expectations of the Millers, father and son, would have been *realized*, the reader will be able to judge by a peep into the *menage* of the operators on the Big Bar. But they very wisely concluded not to pursue the journey farther than Gorgona, where, opening a shop, they disposed of their various commodities at such prices as they could obtain; and by furnishing supplies of comfortables to the passengers over the Isthmus, to get gold without disturbing the bowels of the earth, or by *digging* too deeply into their immediate customers. In this experiment, they have succeeded most admirably; and the location of a conscientious countryman at the *half-way house* of the Isthmus, where good things can be had at moderate prices, and good advice *gratis*, is likely to be of vast benefit to future pilgrims.

My friends were glad to see me, and were able to recognise me, notwithstanding the transformation which a sojourn at the mines had effected. The son had become quite a Spaniard, and was entirely at home with the senors and donnas who patronized his establishment, but the father, not being so much of a linguist, had not gained a great deal of the language of the country. He had put up a house frame of wood, and caused it to be covered with sheet-iron, so as to make a comfortable tenement, and, with the assistance of his son, was enabled to be of great benefit to travellers in making negociations with the Peons, and in other modes facilitating their progress.

It is Mr. Miller's intention to have a more spacious and convenient house brought over from the States, that he may be able to extend his accommodations, and to provide necessary furniture, in anticipation of a just remuneration from passengers, as well as from the employeés of the Railroad Company, during its process to completion; and I hope that his enterprise, as it well deserves to be, will be crowned with success.

Bidding adieu to my good friends, we regained the canoe, where we found an increase of our number, in the person of a "fighting cock," worthy, perhaps, of the immortal Santa Anna, which one of the Peons had procured; and casting off, pursued our way downward, meeting fleets of canoes and light craft, laboriously working their way upwards. I noticed some which were heavily laden, and which were propelled by the passengers themselves; a most mistaken piece of economy, as various fatal accidents had already occurred, by grounding and swamping of canoes, from want of knowledge of the channel; and many deaths, from fevers brought on by severe labor and exposure to the climate; and I most strenuously advise all northerners to submit to Peon extortion, be it ever so great, rather than to overwork themselves in the passage of the Chagres.

We were vociferously questioned by the voyagers in regard to prospects in California; but as we were gliding down so fast, we had but little opportunity to answer questions. But the colloquys of the Peons were more diffuse; but whether the "green ones" going up, or the "done brown ones" going down, formed the subject of their cachinations, I know not. This thing is certain, as Scrub in the play says, "they laughed consumedly." It is the custom of the native boatmen, when exhausted by heat and labor, to throw themselves into the river, in order to refresh themselves; dangers from snakes and alligators, notwithstanding.

Our pilot brought us up under the right bank, near some huts at a short distance from us; and one of the natives, landing, brought on board an armful of sugar-cane, which grows luxuriantly along the river banks, and which was exceedingly pleasant and refreshing. A small quantity of sugar is made on the east coast; but the principal manufacture from the cane on the Isthmus is a spirit called "aquadienté," which has a smoky flavor, and is not agreeable to the taste of those not accustomed to the use of it. The beef, like that of Lower California, is "jerked," that is, cut into strips, and sold by the *yard*, at a York shilling each. This was in the days of the pirates called "boucan;" and from thence comes the word "boucanier," or buccaneer, which has been applied to the freebooters.

As we approached the coast, our ears were pleasingly saluted by the roaring of the surf, as it washed the shores of the bay; and soon our eyes were gratified by the sight of lights at Chagres, and on board different vessels in the road; and none, unless similarly situated, can realize our satisfaction when we were alongside the Falcon, and prepared to mount her decks.

The great journey was accomplished thus far; the Isthmus and its dangers had been encountered; and although none knew that he had not within him the seeds of death, sown by their deleterious influences, or could tell what mishaps might befall him on the passage homeward, where boisterous elements were likely to meet us on the coast, yet, rejoicing in present safety, we gave care to the winds, and anticipated a speedy return to homes, the comforts of which we were well prepared hereafter to appreciate.

We were soon landed, and my baggage on the strand, and the sable capitano of the canoe handed his eight dollars, I was prepared to go in quest of a passage to New-York: fortunately, I fell in with the captain of the Falcon, who informed me that he was ready for sea, and would get under weigh as soon as he reached his vessel. I therefore directed my baggage to be placed in the boats of the steamer, and soon found myself, if not treading Yankee soil, treading on planks which grew thereon; and the steam being up, at ten o'clock, the anchor was got on board, and our prow was turned homeward, as we dashed to sea with a rapid motion. I was sorry to part with my fellow wayfarer; but as he had taken, at San Francisco, a ticket for the Crescent City, he was obliged to go on board her; while I, more fortunate, was first at sea, at considerable saving of expense and passage money.

On board the Falcon I was at home again. *Necessity*, which, like misery, "acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows," had dealt hardly with me on the Pacific; but now, a good berth, in a good state-room, with clean and comfortable accessaries, seemed luxurious in the extreme. And well did I enjoy the unbroken slumbers of the night. As morning dawned I was upon deck, in order to snuff the cool and bracing air of the ocean, which gave me an appetite for the breakfast which was preparing; and when it was announced that it was in readiness, I made my way to the cabin in proper mood to discuss its numerous dainties.

Things were altered on board the Falcon; competition had done its work; and, instead of short fare, and insolent waiters, plenty abounded, and the best of attendance was forthcoming. It was not *now* necessary to *snatch*, and *grab*, in order to escape starvation. All our wishes were anticipated by the civilest of servants.

The viands were tempting; the *ice-water*, after having been so many days drenched with the turbid fluids of the Isthmus, was doubly so; and it required all my prudence to refrain from too much indulgence in the outset, and by that means I escaped many derangements to which others, less abstemious, were subjected.

On the 2d December, after a comfortable passage, we arrived at Havana, where we expected to have met the Ohio, to which the New York passengers were to be transferred, while the Falcon was to proceed to New Orleans, with those destined for the Mississippi. But the Ohio had not arrived, and the detention gave me another opportunity to visit the capital of Cuba. It was Sunday, and rather rainy, but we resolved upon landing, and availed ourselves of the numerous shore boats which were alongside.

The injunction to keep "holy the Sabbath-day," is variously understood in various places. I had never been accustomed to the sour-faced ceremonies of the Puritan states, and yet I felt a *little* shocked at the construction of that article of the Decalogue in Roman Catholic countries. The Padres of Panama playing at monte, did seem a most incongruous subversion of it; and the cock-fights, and cock-fighters, fresh from matins, or vespers, appeared little less than abominations. But "time and opportunity change habits." On our landing at Havana, placards were stuck up at certain places, advertising tickets for the *opera of the night*. I had heard much of the magnificence of the opera house, and the splendor of the *troupe* engaged there, and now I might have an opportunity to witness both—but it was Sunday. I once decoyed a Quaker friend into the pit of the Bowery, during the days of Madame Hutin, under pretence of taking him to a *meeting*, and when there I did not find that "Young Broadbrim" was at all horrified at the *gambades* of the celebrated artiste. "When you are at Rome you must do as the Romans," saith the old proverb. Now I was altogether among *Romans*, and I obeyed the proverb and went to the opera.

Neither the house nor the performances were over-rated, and I certainly did enjoy the entertainment without remorse. Here I had an opportunity to observe the Cuban beauties in the boxes unveiled, and found them as handsome as they had been represented. Certainly the Astor House Place could have made a more numerous display, and many nightly there would have borne the palm from the most distinguished senoritas; but yet, there were many whose beautiful and sparkling orbs would have caused a *thrill* in hearts more obdurate than mine.

The performances were over in good season, and we made our way with all expedition to the landing. Here we were beset with a horde of Spanish watermen, each vociferating "I got boat;" "I got boat." We threw ourselves into the first which offered, and for a real were put on board the Falcon. The morning came, but still the Ohio had not arrived; and, as being on shipboard in port is dull music, we landed, in order to amuse ourselves as best we might, riding up and down and about town in omnibuses and volantes; in visiting the Bishop's gardens, and viewing the fruit markets, as well as luxuriating in the delicious fruits with which they abounded. It is only in tropical countries where these can be had in perfection. Those which are brought to our market being but faint resemblances to the mature productions at home.

We tried the *Spanish* which we had learned from the Peon boatmen at the Havana, but found it was regular "*bogus*," and we got vociferously laughed at for the display of our erudition. But wherever the English was spoken, there was no end to the questions which were put to us with regard to California and the mines. At evening I went off to the steamer, bidding farewell to Havana and its denizens, as rumor had reached us that the Ohio was in sight from the Moro; and about 10 o'clock, P. M. she came to anchor in the harbor. The Falcon was warped alongside, and compared with the magnificent proportions of the Ohio, she seemed a porpoise to a whale. As soon as the New York passengers were on board, the Falcon was on her way seaward, and at one o'clock, P. M., our anchor was got up, and we left Havana for New York, with the harbor master on board. The boat of this official was towing behind us, and the warp coming in contact with a shore boat with fruits, which was coming off to us, the boatmen being unable to extricate themselves, had barely time to throw themselves into the other boat before their own was swamped with all its cargo—a grievous loss to the poor fellows, but they were fortunate in escaping death.

There were some citizens of Cuba, of both sexes, on board the Ohio, who had accompanied friends bound to New York—and on taking leave of them, it was amusing to many who had never witnessed French and Spanish customs, to see the men embrace and kiss each other; and many were the audible cachinations, when two reverend *monastics* ended their *adios* by hugging each other with great *onction*. It is proper to state, by way of caution, that travellers to Cuba must be provided with Spanish coin, as that of other countries does not pass current on the island.

The congregation on board the Ohio, compared with those on board the Falcon, on her outward trip, and those on board the Pacific steamers, appeared like a small flock of sheep in a large field. Yet when we came to, at table, our number was quite respectable. Here, on board the Ohio, every thing was served up in the best style, and the attendance and the cookery were all that the most fastidious could desire; and everything was in keeping, from the gentlemanly captain to the menials in the galley. And certainly none need desire a better vessel than the Ohio, nor a better commander than Captain Schenck.

A vast change had "come over the spirit of the dreams" of us Californians, who had been regaled with the horrible cookery and other accompaniments on board the California—and the transit from a pigstye to a palace would be no unmeet comparison. Then, too, we were approaching a place where dangers and diseases were rife—none know the fearful concomitants of a rainy season. But now, at every revolution of the mighty wheels of the Ohio, the majestic vessel was bounding over the ocean wave, constantly approaching that home and those dear objects from which we had been so long estranged, and whose inestimable value were now fully estimated; and every feeling heart beat with gratitude to heaven for vouchsafing us the speedy prospect of reaching our native land in safety.

Off Cape Hatteras we had severe weather, which is generally to be expected in rounding that cape of storms, well worthy of the name which the adventurous Don Gama bestowed upon the Cape, which now bears a name of different signification—for the promontory known as the Cape of Good Hope was, in consequence of the great difficulty which the Portuguese found in doubling it, christened the "Cape of all torments."

Many were sea sick in consequence of the roughness of the ocean, but for myself, I was too much of a salt to be troubled by that distressing malady; yet the recollection of what I had endured on my first visit to the domains of the watery god, disposed me at all times to pity the victims destined to endure the inflictions of his stormy rule.

As we proceeded northward, the weather became cold, and the remnant of the woollen clothing which had stood the wear and tear of California, was put in requisition, but all was insufficient to enable us to encounter, with comfort, the rigors of a northern winter, after so long exposure to the enervating influences of a southern climate.

But now the blue hills of the far off coast were in sight, and we were soon to reach home, where store of comforts awaited us. On the 8th of December, at four o'clock, P. M., we took a pilot on board, but an hour afterwards the weather came on so thick, that it was deemed expedient to anchor outside of the Hook, where we lay until the next morning, which was Sunday. At dawn we got under weigh, and proceeded through the Narrows, soon arriving in sight of the great metropolis of America. All were on deck when it was fairly in view, but being unable to endure the weather, I again went below. The city indeed "stood where it was," unchanged in appearance. The cholera had swept over it, yet every thing seemed the same. But where were the inhabitants? Many changes must have been made in these, and none knew how far, or to whom they had extended. Yet hoping the best, all was joy and bustle as we reached the dock—and the custom-house officers being disposed of, I despatched my baggage to the hotel, and following in the wake of the drayman, I indulged myself with a tramp upon the *side-walk*, to the luxury of which, in the mimic cities of California, they had not yet aspired—and soon was in the comfortable rooms of the hotel.

My appearance was sufficiently grotesque to excite a good deal of surprise; and from the length of my beard I might have been taken for a jew, or classed with the sect of "Dunkers;" and some were so much excited by curiosity, as to be induced to examine the register, in order to discover the country of the new comer. And when it was discovered that the *nondescript* was a veritable live Californian digger, there was no end to the questions showered. If any were unsatisfied with the paucity of the information, which, "being scant o' breath,' I was unable to impart, let them read my book, and profit thereby.

And now, dear reader, if there are any such, who have accompanied me in my wayfaring, you have heard my *experiences*, which I devoutly hope will not be lost upon you. Yet, notwithstanding the many hardships and dangers of the Isthmus route, on the word of a truth-loving pilgrim, I do assure you it is the *best* that can be travelled. That is, if any confidence can be placed in the narrations of those who have gone round Cape Horn, overland by Mexico, or across the Rocky Mountains. But be sure to secure a ticket for the steamers, and never trust a sail craft on the Pacific. And if possible, choose the dry season for the voyage. Be abstemious, long-suffering, and *patient* if you can, for, by "much tribulation" only, can any aspirant for adventure reach the "Golden Gates" of California.

THE END.

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